Methodism Along the Bayou

A History of Methodism in Houma & Terrebonne Parish

by Timothy Hebert

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Timothy Hebert

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DEDICATION

There are many people that I could dedicate this book to ... my family - wife and children, parents, grandparents; our pastors; prominent church leaders; the early circuit riders. All of these have helped to form the Houma Methodist Church and have helped me to put together this history. So, in general, this history is dedicated to all of the above. If I had to pick one person, I guess I would like to dedicate it to my grandfather, Hayes Marcel, Sr. He wasn't a big leader or a big financial contributor; but he was there ... serving his church and his God for over 50 years with his presence, his prayers, his service, and his stewardship. When he passed away, I remember my grandmother saying to us that she hoped that we would grow up to be like my grandfather. Today I still use his life as a measuring stick ... to try to be as good a Christian as my grandfather. So, to my grandfather and to all of the simple people like him who have made up our Methodist Church, I would like to dedicate this history of Methodism in Houma and Terrebonne Parish.

Timothy Hebert

INTRODUCTION

I have organized the book according to the history of the First United Methodist Church of Houma, since it has been the largest faction of Methodism in the area. From 1842 to 1909, the material has been organized by year. From 1909 to the present, the material is separated by pastors of First Church. Three special sections have been separated and put under a separate heading; these are listed in the table of contents.

You may notice that I have more information on the first thirty years of the 20th century than on the most recent thirty years. I tried to concentrate on researching the first hundred years of our history, since much of it was a mystery. I could have included much more on the last thirty years. For the next anniversary, I'll try to cover it more thoroughly.

I also would have liked to have more details on the people ... preachers like Lewis Reed and Robert Martin, and the lay people. I have mentioned just a few of members of the congregation in the text. Most of them were involved in the first half of this century. Needless to say, the history of our church involves thousands of lay persons who have contributed in some way. Again, if you find some obvious oversight, please let me know so that we can add it to the next edition of our history.

I wanted to thank everyone who helped on this project by name, but the list became quite long. Besides, there are so many people to thank, I might accidentally leave someone out. So, let me just thank everyone ... pastors, members of the congregation, and everyone who assisted me in some way.

This project began about three years ago. I had come across some early references to the Methodist Church while researching at the courthouse. After mentioning it to Rev. Bowdon, I decided to look into our history. The longest "history" story on our church was a short (two page) piece written by Ella Hooper over fifty years ago. Almost nothing was known of the early history of the church. The first hundred years was covered by about four sentences. I figured that there must be more to the story than that.

After looking through the courthouse records, I then turned to the church records. I was referred to several shoeboxes that were scattered around the church. After talking to a couple of the older members of the church, it became clear that I would have to look elsewhere for information from our first hundred years. Rev. Bowdon managed to find the funds to help me to go to the Conference Archives in Shreveport.

It was a little disappointing, at first, when I asked to look at material from Houma/Terrebonne. Their books and catalogs had virtually no mention of the area. But I did find the two greatest sources of early material: the Conference Journals and the New Orleans Christian Advocate. I would visit the Archives twice more over the next two years to look for material. It takes quite a while to look through over 4000 newspapers on microfilm, 100 years of Conference Journals, and boxes of other miscellaneous materials.

As for documentation and references, you will notice there are none. I will be depositing my notes and sources at the First United Methodist Church of Houma and the Archives at Shreveport. If you have a question as to the source of any piece of information, you can contact me about it. Most of the material from the first hundred years was obtained from Conference Journals and the Advocate. Most of the material from the last fifty years was obtained from personal interviews.

After I returned, I started scheduling interviews. Although no one could remember everything, I managed to piece together a history by combining everyone's memories. I tried to contact others ... former pastors, people from other Methodist Churches, older people in the community ... with mixed results. There are several areas that I would have liked to have covered more thoroughly, especially the histories of the smaller Methodist Churches in the area. Whenever there is an obvious gap or exclusion, it is because the information wasn't available or no one provided me with the information. If you find that you know something that was left out or is incorrect, please let me know.

Timothy Hebert

CHAPTER 1

FROM THE BEGINNING TO THE EARLY 1800'S

Beginnings of Methodism

The Methodist Church began in the same manner as did Christianity. A religious leader was calling for people to turn to Christ. The leader didn't intend to start a new religion, but the converts felt that they were too different after their conversion to remain under the same religious classification.

Jesus was a faithful Jew all of His life. He wanted the other Jews to follow Him and His teachings. He did not call them to leave the Jewish faith. John Wesley took the same path. He was an Anglican preacher who remained in that faith all his life. But when his followers were converted, they too felt that their "old" religion was wrong for them. Just as the first century followers of Christ became Christians, those who were moved by John Wesley and his theology became Methodists.

John Wesley became an Anglican minister in 1728, at the age of twenty-five. But when his heart was "strangely warmed" in 1738, he began preaching with a new conviction ... the conviction of a saved sinner. His sermons were simple messages aimed at the "common man." He would seek out the people and preach to them, instead of waiting for them to come to church. His style and message resulted in a rapid growth of followers who accepted Christ. But, it also resulted in rapid disapproval from his superiors. Nevertheless, Wesley continued to preach his message. When he died in 1788, there were over 125,000 people calling themselves Methodists in England.

In 1741, Wesley organized a system of "circuit riders." This system would later find its way to America. These itinerant preachers would be assigned an area to cover. This area was sometimes spread out over hundreds of square miles. They would travel from community to community. A community would be lucky to get the preacher to visit them once a month.

Having visited America some years earlier, Wesley realized the need to reach its people. Early missionaries were sent to America in the 1760's and Methodist societies began forming. Even though Wesley supported England in the Revolutionary War, the American Methodists (led by Francis Asbury) had tripled their membership by the time the war had ended. By 1784, there were 15,000 American Methodists.

In 1784, Wesley began ordaining ministers to go to the United States. The Methodist Episcopal Church was formed in Baltimore, Maryland on December 24, 1784. Its leaders were Francis Asbury and Thomas Coke. They adopted the same circuit rider system that Wesley used in England. This was ideally suited for the United

States. Most of the population was rural. Towns and churches might be miles away. The circuit rider arrangement enabled the church to reach out to the people. The simple message of the gospel brought to people where they were enabled the Methodist movement to grow rapidly. As the United States grew, so did the outreach of the Methodist ministers. They often arrived in new territory not long after the settlers moved in.

The Methodist Church hasn't always been one big happy family. The 19th century brought a number of splits in the Methodist membership. In 1816, a number of black Methodists formed their own church, the African Methodist Episcopal Church. Six years later, another coolition of black Methodists formed the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. In the 1820's, the Methodist Protestant Church was formed because some Methodists wanted the lay people to have a bigger role in governing the church. In 1843, the issue of slavery caused some Methodists to withdraw and form the Wesleyan Methodist Church. A large split occured in 1845, when the main branch of Methodism divided into the Methodist Episcopal Church (North) and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. Although the split was basically caused by the issue of slavery, their basic doctrine and policies remained the same. The last major split occurred shortly after the Civil War, in 1870, when a large number of the black Methodists in the Methodist Episcopal Church, South formed the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church. They later (1954) changed it to the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church.

If the 19th century was the time of division, then the 20th century became the time of union. Discussions of union had been around for a while, especially between the two largest groups ... the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. After all, a major issue of their division, slavery, no longer existed. Finally, in 1939, the Methodist Protestant, the Methodist Episcopal, and the Methodist Episcopal, South Churches merged to form the Methodist Church.

The last union came on April 23, 1968, when the Methodist Church joined with the Evangelical United Brethren Church to form the United Methodist Church. The two churches had always shared the same doctrine and theology, but had been separated by language. The Evangelical United Brethren had their roots in German instead of English. But by now, both groups used English.

By 1990, there were over sixteen million members in the forty branches of the Methodist faith around the world.

Beginnings of Terrebonne Parish

The history of people in Terrebonne Parish actually goes back thousands of years. The first visitors to this land, Native Americans who roamed the continent, made their way into south Louisiana. The only evidence of their existence today is the earthen mounds and artifacts they left behind. The first "modern day" visitors to Louisiana were the early European explorers.

In 1682, LaSalle took possession of the Louisiana territory for France. Later, Bienville came to bring settlers. In 1718, his settlers began work on the town that would become New Orleans. Shortly after this, in 1721, a group of settlers from Germany located in St. Charles and St. James Parishes. This was called the German coast. More French settlers would arrive sporadically for years to come. By 1744, there were 3,000 people in south Louisiana, though the Terrebonne Parish area was still virtually noninhabited.

In 1762, France transferred the Louisiana territory to Spain. The Spanish government had a policy of giving land grants to individuals who would settle this pioneer territory. The first major group to take advantage of this was the Acadians. From 1765 to 1785, 3,000 of the Acadians who had been exiled from Canada arrived in south Louisiana ... their New Acadia. The Acadian culture would overshadow the other nationalities of the region. Even today, south Louisiana is known as Acadiana.

In the late 1770's, a number of Spanish settlers came from the Canary Islands. Also, the slave rebellions in Santo Domingo drove thousands of people to Louisiana.

The Acadian, French, and Spanish settlers first settled along Bayou Lafourche. It wasn't until the end of the 18th century that they began to move along the bayous into Terrebonne Parish.

The Houmas Indians moved into Terrebonne Parish during the last quarter of the 18th century. They had originally lived in the Feliciana parishes. They moved down to the Bayou St. John area in the early 1700's. Due to conficts in the tribes, they eventually moved south and formed six settlements in Terrebonne Parish. The major concentration of Indians settled in the community of Dulac.

It is important to note that for the first one hundred years of settlers in Louisiana, the territory was controlled by either France or Spain. Both of these countries have Roman Catholicism as the state religion. The citizens had to be Catholic. Even after the United States took control, the Catholic influence remained strong. It would be over one hundred more years before Protestants would show any significant growth in south Louisiana. Roman Catholics still outnumber Protestants in Terrebonne and Lafourche Parishes.

In 1803, France once again took control of Louisiana and soon sold it to the United States. The first English settlers began to move into Louisiana. The year 1812, when Louisiana became a state, brought an influx of settlers ... English, Irish, Scottish, and so on ... from the American states. With these settlers came the Protestant ministers. The three major Protestant denominations at this time were Methodist, Baptist, and Presbyterian.

By 1850, it was clear that the United States was a Protestant nation. Of the over 34,000 churches in America, 13,280 were Methodist, 9,375 were Baptist, 4,824 were Presbyterian, 1,706 were Congregational, and 1,459 were Episcopal. There were only 1,221 Roman Catholic churches. In the middle of the largely Protestant United States stood south Louisiana. Here, the situation was reversed. It was still as strongly Catholic as the rest of the country was Protestant.

There were several small settlements in Terrebonne Parish that had sprung up along the various waterways. Houma, at this time, was still a small town. It was founded in 1834 and incorporated in 1848. When the first church was built in the 1840's, the population was 200-300. Fifty years later, the population had only grown to about 1,200. Thibodaux was much bigger in the early days. As the seafood, sugar cane, and lumber business picked up in Terrebonne Parish, Houma outgrew Thibodaux. In the 20th century, with the discovery of oil, Houma's population increased to several times that of Thibodaux. The current population of Houma and its suburbs is over 50,000.

The Roman Catholic religion still holds a lot of clout in the area. Almost 50% of families that claim a denomination are Roman Catholic. In Terrebonne Parish, only 1.8% of families are United Methodist. The figures are similar for neighboring Lafourche Parish. Of the Protestant religions, the Baptist Church has experienced the most growth in the area during the past 75 years.

CHAPTER 2

METHODISM MOVES INTO TERREBONNE PARISH

Almost 100% of the population of early south Louisiana was Roman Catholic. But many weren't devout in their faith. Since Catholicism was the only religion in town, one had to be Catholic if you wanted a minister for births, deaths, and marriages. Just a few years before, in 1795, the Spanish governor Estevan Miro declared that "no preacher of any religion but the Catholic" may come into the province. The Catholic priests even warned early Protestant ministers not to preach here. Even Wesley himself noted in 1758, while visiting Ireland, that the Catholics would like to "cut the throats of all Protestants." The Protestants were viewed as pagans by the Catholics.

Since the early Methodists preachers were usually uneducated men who breezed through town with only the clothes on their backs, the people found it hard to place their trust in them. After all, the Catholic priests were educated men who would stay for several years at a time and would build impressive church buildings. Methodist preachers could not stay on the same circuit for more that two years; and congregations were lucky if the preacher could make it to their area once a month. It would be years before any significant numbers of Methodist churches would be built. The native Catholics were hesitant about turning their faith over to a religion that didn't even have a church in the area. This feeling would continue to hamper the Protestant movement in the area throughout the 19th century.

Methodism first entered Louisiana through Tobias Gibson, who had been appointed to the Natchez circuit in 1799. He probably ventured into what is now northeast Louisiana, but no significant preaching was done there. In 1802, this Natchez circuit was included in the Western Conference.

The Methodist Church did not waste much time after Louisiana was purchased by the United States in 1803. The first recorded Methodist preaching in Louisiana was by Lorenzo Dow in 1804. But nothing came of it. Later in 1804, Learner Blackman was appointed to the Natchez Circuit. Dow reported to Blackman of the need to send someone to Louisiana. So, Blackman was the first regular circuit rider to venture into Louisiana.

In 1805, Blackman asked for a preacher to be sent to New Orleans. Elisha W. Bowman was sent by the bishop to cover the Opelousas Circuit (which covered all of southern Louisiana). Blackman suggested that he start in New Orleans. The Western Conference paid his way ($100). So, Bowman left in 1805, went down through Natchez, and down the Mississippi River to New Orleans. He arrived on December 1, 1805. The Governor promised he could use the State House to preach in, but it was locked on Sunday. So he preached on the street, to the constant jeering of the townfolk.

When this happened again the next Sunday, Bowman decided to move on. On December 17, he said "I shook off the dirt from my feet against this ungodly city of Orleans."

His rejection could be due to the fact that an apostate Methodist preacher who was recently in the city gave Methodists a bad name. Also, fifty-five Protestants had recently met in New Orleans to decide what kind of minister to invite. Since forty-seven of them voted to invite an Episcopalian, Rev. Bowman's arrival may have even been rejected by the Protestants in the town.

Leaving New Orleans, he rode fifty miles up the Mississippi River. Then he followed Bayou Lafourche southward for fifty miles. Crossing swampy terrain for fifteen miles, he came upon a settlement of Spanish people on the shores of a large lake. He secured two canoes, built a platform on them for his horse, and hired two Spaniards to row him to the mouth of the Bayou Teche. He rode eighty miles up the Teche and finally reached Opelousas. The church he founded there was known as the "mother church" for Methodism in Louisiana. That first year, he accepted seventeen members into the church.

It was not easy going for the Louisiana circuit riders. When Blackman later visited Bowman, he commented that the area was the worst in the continent for the itinerant preacher. The circuit riders would continue to find the land and the people hard to handle.

In 1809, Benjamin Edge was appointed to the Opelousas circuit. This circuit was at that time in the Mississippi District of the Western Conference. This was the only circuit in southern Louisiana. The preacher attempted to preach in New Orleans, but nothing came of it. North Louisiana had a number of circuits that developed more over the years. They were not under the Catholic influence that south Louisiana was under. Rev. Edge was followed in 1810 by John Henninger. By 1810, there were forty-three Methodists in the New Orleans territory.

The circuit was renamed the Attakapas circuit when William Winans was appointed in 1811. Though the circuit was supposed to cover south Louisiana, Rev. Winans probably never ventured further west than New Orleans during this appointment. His income from this position was thirty dollars. Rev. Winans found only three Methodists in New Orleans, which had a population of five thousand at that time. One of these Methodists, a German named Jacob Knobb, gave him a place to stay. Rev. Winans rented a downstairs front room where he taught school and held church services. This was located on Bienville between Chartres and Royal. His efforts at this time yielded few results. He found that the people of Louisiana "were more concerned with amusements and parties." By the year's end, he had fewer than twelve members. In 1812, south Louisiana was divided into two circuits. John S. Ford took over the Attakapas. New Orleans got its own preacher, Miles Harper.

In 1813, the Louisiana District was formed. It was under the Tennessee Conference. The only preacher appointed in south Louisiana was John S. Ford (Attakapas circuit). Of the ninety-nine (eighty-nine whites and ten black) Louisiana Methodists at this time, sixty-five of them were on the Attakapas circuit. Richmond Nolley was appointed to the circuit the following year. He lived the typically hard life of the circuit rider. He once was saved by a Negro woman (armed with a hoe) from a group of ruffians who tried to pull him out of the pulpit. Black families would turn out to be some of the most faithful members of the early Methodist Church. Eventually, Nolley died in the field while travelling through the Attakapas. He was only thirty years old.

It is uncertain whether the Terrebonne Parish area was considered as part of the Attakapas circuit or part of the New Orleans circuit. The Attakapas circuit received a preacher each year. New Orleans, however, received preachers sporadically over the next decade. Sometimes, a "missionary" was sent to the area from another conference. Pastors appointed to the New Orleans circuit were referred to as missionaries.

For example, Rev. Lewis Hobbs was sent to New Orleans by the South Carolina Conference shortly after the Louisiana District was formed. He would preach to the prisoners in jail on Sunday mornings and then hold three services in a rented house. It was said that his sermons were short, only thirty to forty minutes long. Although he had a weak body, he was an eloquent speaker who spoke from the heart. His job was not an easy one. The Catholic church consistantly tried to stop his preaching. He lasted about a year before returning to the East.

Some of the other preachers appointed to New Orleans were Mark Moore (1819), John Manifee (1820), Daniel Hall (1824), and Benjamin Drake (1825-26). Needless to say, they only preached to the English-speaking population of Louisiana. The French had yet to hear the Methodist message.

In 1819, the Missionary and Bible Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church was organized in New York. Its major goal was to reach the home mission field. One of the major factors in organizing the society was the need for missionary work among the French population. Francis Asbury, writing to Joseph Benson in 1816, notes that "... upon this continent we are crowded with French people ... we want French Methodist preachers." In May, 1819, the New York District appointed the Society's first missionary. Dr. William Phoebus was appointed as missionary to the French in Louisiana. Unfortunately, they could not raise the necessary funds to send him and his family to New Orleans.

A few months later, the New York Conference appointed Ebenezer Brown as missionary to Louisiana. After raising money for a horse and travelling expenses, he was sent to "preach to the French inhabitants of Louisiana," as the 1820 Conference Minutes noted. Though he made it to New Orleans, Rev. Brown failed to gain access to the French population. He spent his time assisting John Manifee in preaching to an English congregation until his return to New York in 1821. The first attempt at reaching the French population of Louisiana had resulted in failure. It would be years before the French home mission field in Louisiana would receive another French-speaking missionary.

It was under the tenure of Rev. Drake that the numbers of Methodists began to show any real increase. The circuit was now referred to as the New Orleans Mission. Rev. Drake himself stated that "New Orleans presents a more unyielding resistance to the evangelical gospel ... than any other city in the South." Though he would have his work cut out for him, Rev. Drake firmly planted Methodism in New Orleans.

While these ministers were appointed to New Orleans, they probably ventured into the parishes west of Orleans. In 1823, for example, Rev. Drake and a Mr. Devinne visited New Iberia. It had been visited by an earlier preacher, because Rev. Drake stated that the hall used previously for preaching was not available. Not finding a room to use, the men prepared to leave. But they noticed an attractive ship on the Bayou Teche. Upon investigating the ship, they found that the crew was Methodist. The captain invited the preachers to hold services on the ship. This was not to be, since someone stepped up and offered the home of his son-in-law (a Mr. French) as a meeting place. The next spring, Rev. Drake returned and held a revival. Nine or ten people were converted. Several members of the French family and a man named Marinie Prince were among the converts. Their descendants would later form the nucleus of the French Mission many years later.

Rev. Drake was succeeded in 1827 by Peyton S. Greaves and in 1828 by William M. Curtiss. The New Orleans mission was moved from the Mississippi District to the Washington District. There were 618 white and 316 black Methodists in Louisiana by the end of 1828. It is possible that a Methodist preacher might have brought the first Methodist meeting into the Terrebonne-Lafourche area at this time.

The early church meetings led by the circuit riders usually consisted of camp meetings and revivals. After churches were established and pastors assigned to them, these meetings were usually led by visiting preachers. These services were held in churches (if one existed), private homes, rented rooms, and outdoors ... depending upon the size of the group. Sometimes churches of other Protestant denominations were used.

Camp meetings would last for seven to ten days. They were gatherings of the people from a limited area at a central place where they could camp and attend the services. Services were held morning, afternoon, and night.

Revivals were held where a church already existed. Services were held in the morning and at night. The style of the message varied with the preacher. Some used persuasion. Some shed tears. Some used the old fire and brimstone approach.

A typical sermon would be evangelistic. Those in attendance were urged to accept Christ as Lord and Savior. It might also throw in a bit of doctrine; many sermons were aimed at the Catholics and Baptists. Most sermons, however, were aimed at winning converts, not at nurturing the committed. Since a typical circuit had eight to twelve stops, the preacher could not stay in any one place for too long. It was left to the lay people in the congregation to keep up the church while the preacher was gone. Because of this, communion was often neglected. The lay people couldn't serve communion; and when the preacher was in town, he concentrated on soul-winning.

The typical service might have consisted of a song, the sermon, and a closing song ... altogether lasting about an hour. John Wesley himself told his circuit riders to preach this way. There are not too many preachers who could hold an audience's attention for hours at a time, as Wesley could. Of course, revivals and camp meetings consisted of numerous services of this type. Singing was popular; though they usually only sang the hymns that they knew by heart.

It was not uncommon for people to shout out in a service. In fact, an article in the New Orleans Christian Advocate said that "out loud AMEN's were encouraged."

The typical Methodist preacher of this time was young and uneducated. This contrasted with the older, educated priest of the Catholic church. The Methodist circuit rider often came from another state. So they were speaking to a strange people in a strange land. Since they were speaking to a largely uneducated population, their common-sense message was appealing. They were doing as John Wesley had done ... speaking to the people in everyday language. Of course, since many of the people spoke only French, it would be many years before they were exposed to Methodism.

Despite their faults, the Methodist circuit rider had one basic characteristic ... they had a desire to spread the gospel. It is obvious that they didn't do it for the money. The annual pay was usually less than fifty dollars. The Methodist preacher was usually one of the poorest men in town, financially at least. They would often have to supplement their pay with other jobs. A parsonage was unheard of in the early days. The preacher would stay in someone's home.

Their dress was considered standard in its day. The older preachers still wore short pants and stockings, knee buckles, and a round-breasted coat with tails. The "newer" preachers were now wearing a frock coat.

It was in 1828 that the Lafourche Mission first appears in the Methodist records. You will note that here, and elsewhere, the term Lafourche often refers to the area south of Donaldsonville, including Terrebonne Parish. Since waterways were more important than roads back then, Bayou Lafourche was the principle passageway into Lafourche and Terrebonne Parishes. Also, Terrebonne was a "young" parish, having been formed in 1822 from part of Lafourche Parish. So Lafourche is used to describe the area, rather than a specific parish. When you read "Lafourche," keep in mind that Terrebonne Parish may be included.

The Lafourche Mission is listed as "to be supplied" in 1828 and 1829. This meant that they would appoint a preacher to the circuit when they could find someone to fill the position. In Rev. John G. Jones' A Complete History of Methodism, the author mentions that the Bayou Lafourche area was "rapidly being settled by an English-speaking population. A new circuit was projected in that region, but for the want of a preacher was on the unsupplied list this year (1929)."

They recognized the need for a preacher in the area, but either there were not enough preachers to fill all of the appointments or no available preacher wanted to venture into the strongly Catholic land of the "Cajuns." It might have been a little of both. Presiding elder O.L. Nash said in an 1834 article to the New York Christian Advocate that most missions in Louisiana were unsupplied. After two years on the "to be supplied" list, the Lafourche Mission was dropped from the appointment list in 1830. It is not even mentioned in 1831.

In 1832, the New Orleans District was formed. Barnabas Pipkin was the presiding elder. The Lafourche Mission finally appears with an appointed preacher ... Benjamin T. Coxe. The membership of the area was 20 whites and 20 blacks. The first Protestant sacraments were administered in the area that year by the presiding elder, Rev. William Winans, at the courthouse in Thibodaux. These first communicants were Julia A. Perkins, Mrs. Fickland, and Mrs. Gov. Johnson.

In Rev. R.J. Harp's church journal, it is mentioned that there had been no Protestant preaching in the area (Lafourche Circuit) prior to 1832. Rev. Coxe was probably the first Methodist minister to preach in Terrebonne Parish. He probably preached at Bayou Cane, since that is where the courthouse was located. Houma didn't even exist yet. When a church wasn't available, services were often held at courthouses or courtyards. The courthouse had been built in 1822 in Bayou Cane. The site is presently occupied by a gas station near the Southland Mall. Rev. Coxe served for one year and was replaced in 1833 by Daniel Sears.

Rev. Sears was then replaced by E.N. Talley, who served the Lafourche Mission from 1834 to 1835. The small town of Houma was founded in 1834. A new courthouse was built on the site of our present courthouse. Services were probably held there, as well as at some northern parts of the parish. Talley was moved to Wilkinson in 1836, and the Lafourche Mission was left to be supplied in 1837. In 1838, it was again dropped from the list of appointments.

CHAPTER 3

THE RISE AND FALL OF TERREBONNE METHODISM

1842

Finally, in 1842 another pastor was appointed to the area. In that year, John Powell was sent to the Lafourche Mission. He had spent the last few years on the Franklin/Newtown circuit, just west of Terrebonne Parish. Newtown was an old name for New Iberia. It is quite possible that he had ventured into Terrebonne Parish at some time during his Franklin/Newtown appointment.

Lafourche was now in the Natchez District. Rev. Harp's church journal ... which you'll hear more about later ... notes that the Lafourche Circuit extended from Donaldsonville to Berwick Bay. The stops have included Donaldsonville, Napoleonville, Labadieville, Thibodaux, Houma, Gibson, and Berwick. Rev. Powell is probably the first Methodist minister to make regular stops in Terrebonne Parish.

Meanwhile, Father Menard was ordained and became the Catholic priest in Thibodaux. He made his way into Houma, conducting services in the courthouse from time to time. He said that Houma consisted of about twenty homes along the bayou. He noted that the people were "ignorant of the principal truths of religion." Later, in 1844, he suggested that a Catholic church be built in Houma.

1843

In 1843 the Lafourche circuit became part of the New Orleans District, where William Winans was the presiding elder. That year, both John Powell and Philo M. Goodwyn were appointed to the Lafourche circuit. Rev. Goodwyn, who was only twenty-three at the time, would later return to the area in the 1860's. It is noted in Rev. Harp's journal that funds were being raised towards the building of a church in Thibodaux (and probably in Houma as well). Rev. Powell, the elder of the two ministers, was probably the impetus behind the building of the church.

1844

In 1844, Henry B. Price and Stephen J. Davies were appointed to the Lafourche Mission, as it was now called. These were probably the preachers who encouraged the Houma Methodists to work on building their own church.

> Rev. Price was from Morehouse Parish. Later, in 1855, he married Miss C.A. Kidd in Union Parish.
>
> Rev. Davies came from Cardiganshire, Wales. He was born in 1816 and passed away in 1864. He was buried in St. Mary

Parish. He had a son, Stephen Davies, Jr., who became a prominent Methodist minister. It was said that Rev. Davies was "one of the most eloquent, powerful and successful preachers of modern times."

This year also saw the transfer of Charles P. Clark from the New York to the Mississippi Conference. He had learned fluent French so that he could preach to the French population of Louisiana. But, because of the turmoil concerning the separation of the Methodist Episcopal Church into northern and southern factions, he left the denomination and joined the Protestant Episcopal Church. The French of south Louisiana would have to wait for over thirty years before hearing the Gospel in their tongue.

1845

In 1845, Rev. Price was reappointed to the Lafourche Mission and Rev. W.W. Jenkins took Rev. Davies' place. It is in this year that the first church of any denomination in Terrebonne Parish was begun. Up to this time, religious services were held in the courthouse. On January 14, 1845, the Methodist Episcopal Church of the United States bought a lot from Richard H. Grinage for $200. It was located on the southeast corner of the intersection of South Street and Terrebonne Street. These streets are known today as Goode Street and Belanger Street. Some of the residents who made up this first church were: Dr. William F. Robinson, Dr. John Wesley Danks, John Watson, Van Winder, Joseph Semple, James Cage, and Samuel Clifton. The church was built shortly after. Funds to build the church came not only from the Methodists, but also from Episcopalians, Presbyterians, and non-Protestants. Since it would be over ten years before the other Protestant religions built their own churches, they were allowed to use the Methodists' church when it was free.

It is interesting to note that the first church in this predominantly Catholic Terrebonne Parish was a Methodist church. Although the Acadians, Spanish, and French had always been Catholic, they had been without a church and priest since they came to the Louisiana territory. They had to rely on priests visiting from other parishes to perform church rituals. The Terrebonne Catholics were served by St. Joseph's Church in Thibodaux, which had been formed in 1817. Father Menard of St. Joseph's had recognized the need for a church in Houma. In 1847, Father Z. Leveque was assigned to organize the Catholic Parish of St. Francis de Sales of Houma. The early services by Father Leveque were held in the courthouse (at 9:30 on Sundays) and in private homes. He described the Cajuns as "good-natured, kind, hospitable, and anxious to learn."

A subscription list to build the Catholic church was circulated in 1847. Every Catholic was asked to pledge $10 ... $5 to be paid in 1848 and $5 in 1849. The church was to cost $2050. The church was begun in 1848. Father Leveque left in April 1848 for France. No one knows what became of him. Father E. Barthe came to finish the church and stayed until 1852. The next priest stayed only one month and left. Due to priest turnover and financial problems, the Catholic church was still under construction in 1853. When finished, the brick structure was 47' by 90' and could hold forty families.

Though Episcopal and Presbyterian ministers had visited the area since the late 1830's, the first Protestant church in the area wasn't built until the 1840's. St. John's Episcopal Church of Thibodaux was begun in 1844 and was completed in 1845. It still stands on Jackson Street in Thibodaux. The original church was a rather plain looking building, since the steeple was not added until ten years later. The driving force behind the Episcopal Church was George Guion (who donated the land) and Rev. Leonidas Polk. It had twenty-four members the first year, fourteen of whom were black. The Episcopals and Presbyterians in Terrebonne Parish didn't build their own churches until the mid to late 1850's. They used the Methodist church and/or the courthouse.

Of course, the Methodist churches did not look anything like the Catholic churches. Rev. Harper, in his book In the Land of New Acadie, says that "Catholics built churches that looked like churches. Methodist churches might look like a barn, a town hall, or a Greek temple. They have rough, homemade seats (pews) and an assortment of chairs. Sometimes there is a piano or organ, though not in good shape. It wasn't very appealing to the Catholics who were used to their grand cathedrals. Most French Mission churches were like this."

This was the general style of Protestant churches at the time. They were usually 36' by 57', give or take a few feet. They were built up on brick posts. They had a high-pitched saddle-back roof covered with shingles. A stove was often placed in the middle of the room for heat. Besides pews and chairs, the only other piece of furniture was the pulpit and lectern. There were about five windows on each side of the church, but usually none on the facade. If any had stained glass windows, there would never appear images of Christ or Biblical people/things. The only "Catholic" feature sometimes found would be a small tower topped by a steeple. If you visit the church in Gibson, you will see an example of an early Methodist church. It is quite simple. The Protestants intentionally tried to stay away from the Catholic style of church architecture.

Although there are no surviving photographs or sketches of Houma's original Methodist church, we can piece together an image of the building based on old maps and newspaper articles. The church was a wood-framed structure about 42' by 57'. This included an 8' gallery (porch) in the front, supported by six columns. There were probably four to five shuttered windows on each side, but none in the front or back. Although it could have been unpainted, it may have been painted white since it was a church. Whitewashed walls with green windows was a popular color scheme for churches back then. It was probably set on blocks, as most buildings were at that time. The only "liberty" taken in the sketch we have done is the steeple. The Gibson church (which is still standing) had no steeple. The Thibodaux church had a large 50' tall steeple. Since the size of the Houma church was in-between these two churches, it is not improbable to assume that it had a small steeple. Such steeples were common on country churches of that day.

There were over 8,000 Methodists in Louisiana in the 1840's, over half of which were black. The Attakapas Circuit, which included the Lafourche Mission, had about 1,500 members. Once again, half of these were black.

The Methodist Church made a major split this year. The Conference reprimanded Bishop James O. Andrew because he had not freed slaves that he inherited. Many of the southern churches separated to form the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. The question of slavery, which the Methodist Church had always opposed, was one of the major reasons for the separation.

Virtually all Louisiana Methodists were in the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. The Methodist Episcopal Church (North) ... while preaching against slavery ... failed to put their integration into practice. The northern branch of the Methodist Church would not make its way down to south Louisiana until after the Civil War.

Most of the blacks were reached when the Methodist ministers were allowed to preach to the workers on the plantations. Where there were churches, whites and blacks sometimes met together in the same church, though they sat in separate areas. When they took communion, the blacks and whites would take it side by side. The black population was very receptive to the Methodist message. Since the Methodists preached to all on a simple level, the blacks readily understood and accepted. As one ex-slave said, the Methodist preachers "preached in a grammer so plain that the way-faring man, though a fool, could not err therein." The Methodist preachers, likewise, eagerly accepted the blacks into the church. In fact, by 1847, there were eight missions in Louisiana aimed at the black population. These missions were continued until the end of the Civil War.

1846

In 1846, Lafourche was placed under the Attakapas District. John Powell was the presiding elder. Philip H. Dieffenwierth and Thomas J. Lacey were appointed to the Lafourche Mission.

1847

In 1847, the Louisiana Conference was formed. At the first conference in Opelousas, the Houma/Bayou Black circuit got its first appointment. Charles J. Hallberg, who had been in the

Plaquemine area the previous year, was appointed. He served from January 1847 through 1848.

> Rev. Hallberg was born in the West Indies on June 3, 1820. He and his family came to New Orleans when he was a boy. He was converted when he was seventeen years old. He was admitted on trial as a Methodist preacher in 1844 and was appointed to the Vidalia Circuit. Rev. Hallberg was admitted into full connection and ordained deacon by Bishop Soule at the first session of the Louisiana Conference in Opelousas in January of 1847. After serving Houma/Bayou Black, he moved on to the Richmond Circuit. On December 22, 1851, he married Eliza Lambert in New Orleans. Rev. Hallberg worked for the rest of his ministry in central and northern Louisiana. He also served in the Civil War as a chaplain in Mississippi. It was said that he was a faithful and self-denying laborer who had endured and suffered much in the service of the church. He died in Isaquena County, Mississippi on July 29, 1870. He left behind his wife and five children.

Philo M. Goodwyn and Thomas J. Lacey were appointed to the Lafourche area (which now extended from Donaldsonville to Thibodaux) for 1847. Lafourche had a membership of 36 whites and 33 black.

1848

Although the Conference Journal shows Houma "to be supplied" for 1848, Rev. Hallberg seems to have stayed in the area for part or most of the year. In 1848, Houma/Bayou Black had a membership of 30 whites.

William R. Gober was appointed to the Lafourche Circuit, which was now only Napoleonville and Thibodaux. Rev. Gober was single; he would marry in 1851 to Miss N.P. Beazley, a minister's daughter from Jackson, Mississippi. They later moved to California.

Lafourche had 30 whites and 60 blacks in its membership for the year. Lafourche and Houma were now in the Baton Rouge District.

Houma was incorporated as a town in 1848. The first mayor was N.H. Rightor.

1849

In 1849, Alexander Sutherland was appointed supernumerary for the Houma circuit. He was a retired pastor who agreed to take the pulpit for a year. There were 48 whites on the Houma/Bayou Black circuit. Rev. Gober continued on the Lafourche Circuit. Rev. Lewis Reed was now working in the area as a missionary. The Lafourche Colored Mission was formed to reach the slave population of the area. Rev. Reed would continue his missionary position for the next four years.

Lewis A. Reed was born in September of 1812 in Henderson, Kentucky. He married Miss Eleanor Martha Phillips. He had joined the Poydras St. church in 1842. Before entering the ministry, Rev. Reed worked as an accountant. He was also a partner in a N.O. omnibus company. He sold his interest in the omnibus company after his conversion, because he refused to have a hand in a business that operated on the Sabbath.

The itinerant life was hard on the Reeds. Their little girl, Rosina, died in 1853 when she was six years old. Only two years later, their eight month old son, Robert, also died.

A number of his charges were to "colored missions". It was said that "few men were ever respected and reverenced by the whites or beloved by the negroes as was Brother Reed." Even though he might have seemed serious on the outside, the children and youth adored him. He made effective use of the Scripture in his sermons and was a better than average doctrinal preacher.

His first appointment was in the New Orleans area in 1845. Rev. Reed served the Napoleonville/Lafourche (from 1851 to 1853) and Lafourche/Bayou Black Circuits (from 1854 to 1856). He wrote to the Advocate several times at this period to list marriages he had performed. It appears that a popular spot for weddings was the Rose Cottage, a beautiful home in Terrebonne Parish. He quit the ministry temporarily in 1867 due to money problems. He later went back to the Lafourche Circuit (1876-1878). He continued to serve charges around Louisiana until his death. He passed away on January 20, 1899.

Cornelius C. Wallis and John Wallis donated a lot of land in Tigerville (now called Gibson) on May 17, 1849 to the Methodists for the construction of a church and cemetery. The church building was built before the end of the year (see Rev. Price's article in the next paragraph). The church built on this property still stands today. Some of the original members of this church were Tobias Gibson, John McIntyre, and William Thompson. Of the churches at Thibodaux, Houma, and Tigerville, this one was the smallest and simplest. It is a variation of Greek revival style that was common at the time. It was known back then as the Sycamore Church, because sycamore trees grew in the yard.

Rev. H.B. Price (who served the area in 1844-1845), writing to DeBow's Review from Bayou Black in 1849, says that "there is a Methodist church newly built" in Houma. He also mentions the church at Gibson, saying "there is likewise another Protestant church, belonging to the Methodists on Bayou Black, and recently completed." Since the Gibson church was built in less than a year, the Houma Church was probably completed in 1845 or 1846. The Houma Church was larger than the Gibson Church. Rev. Price goes on to say that the slaves are allowed to participate in religious duties; and that some of the plantation owners "consider it a duty to provide a religious instructor to their slaves, i.e. K.H. Cage, Tobias Gibson, Dr. Danks."

1850

Rev. Sutherland was replaced by Henderson A. Morse in 1850. Rev. Morse had one local preacher to assist him. His job was to fill in for the minister when he was preaching elsewhere. The membership of whites was down to 15, but the membership of blacks was up to 95.

The Houma church was dedidated in 1850. The service was led by the presiding elder, W.H. Crenshaw.

The first Sabbath School (Sunday School) was formed at Houma. At this time, there were fewer than three dozen Sabbath Schools in all of Louisiana.

The Lafourche Circuit was taken in 1850 by Rev. William J. Ferguson. The Lafourche Colored Mission was served by Rev. Lewis A. Reed. Although the Colored Mission had only a couple of whites, it served around 500 blacks.

According to the Historical Atlas of Religion in America, there were more Methodist churches in Louisiana (125) than any other denomination in 1850. But the memberships were usually quite small compared to the Catholic churches. Catholic churches at the time covered entire parishes, while Protestant churches served a smaller community.

1851

Rev. Morse left Houma after one year. The Houma church was now served by Rev. Ferguson, who had both the Lafourche and Houma charges. The membership of both circuits combined was 46 whites and 166 blacks. Lewis Reed, still serving the Colored Mission, had 3 whites and 329 blacks.

In a May 27th letter to the New Orleans Christian Advocate, Rev. Reed mentioned that it takes him four weeks to cover the thirteen plantations along the two hundred mile length of Bayou Lafourche and its tributaries. He noted that the church at Thibodaux was to be dedicated on September 24, 1851. In speaking of the Tigerville church, he said that its prospects were flattering.

After a trial run in 1850, the New Orleans Christian Advocate began its ninety plus year history. Different editions of the Christian Avocate newspaper were issued around the country. The New Orleans edition covered the news from Louisiana, Mississippi, and sometimes Alabama. It also included articles from around the country and the world on Methodism and religion. Much of the information gathered for this book would have been impossible to obtain without the old issues of the Advocate.

A March 15, 1851 issue of the Advocate describes the travels of the "first year of an itinerant in Louisiana Interior" whose initials were P.A.S. The minister writing this letter had a circuit that stretched across south Louisiana. Traveling by boat, he made his way to Houma (after visiting everyone who would open their doors to him). Upon reaching Houma, he preached at Houma's "new, beautiful and commodious church." He noted that before this church was built, services were held in the courthouse.

Besides the church, there were several other preaching places in the parish. They were: every six weeks, on Thursday night, at Mrs. Pierce's plantation; every three weeks, on Saturday night, at Mr. S. Gibson's plantation (one mile above Houma); every six weeks, on Sunday evening, alternating between Dr. Danks' plantation (on Bayou Terrebonne, eight miles below Houma and three miles above Mrs. P's plantation) and Messrs. Mayfield and Lane's plantation (on Grand Caillou, six miles from Houma); every three weeks, at 2 p.m. on Sunday, at Mr. Cage's plantation (four miles below Houma on Grand Caillou). At Tigerville, he preaches every three weeks to whites and blacks. In the evening, he preaches to Mr. S. Gibson's "negroes" about six miles above Tigerville. The planters in the area wanted their slaves to hear the preaching, also.

The article's author also mentions that the Catholics have a "large brick edifice here, intended for a church, but unfinished." He goes on to describe that the "priest who had collected the money to build it went to France and neither he nor the money returned."

G.N. Pierce says in a 1851 article of DeBow's Review that Houma "consists of five stores, ten to twelve dwelling houses, a church (Methodist), a blacksmith shop, a school-house, hotel, grog-shop, and billiard room," and a courthouse, jail, and official offices. There were also several doctors and lawyers' offices. He goes on to say that "in respect to religion, it is rather below par; however, there is a half-finished brick Catholic church at Houma, generally well-attended, (nearly all the Creoles being Catholics); also a Methodist church." The Methodist church was also used by the Episcopalians and Presbyterians on Sundays when the Methodists weren't using it. The Methodist circuit preachers had been holding regular services at the church, but there was little enthusiasm from the community. The preachers were forced to move on for lack of financial support (they were "frequently starved out"). The Methodist church at Tigerville, was in about the same shape as the one in Houma.

Bishop James Andrew said at this time that the Methodists tended to start a church and then neglect its growth. It seemed as though this was happening in Terrebonne Parish.

The 6th session of the Louisiana Conference was held in Guion's Academy in Thibodaux in December, 1851. Guion's Academy was the first public school, built on land donated by George Guion, an Episcopalian. At this time, Thibodaux was much larger than Houma, with a population of 1200-1500. Having a church in a city in the middle of the heartland of Catholicism was probably considered a big deal.

Though the Thibodaux church was built on a back street, it was moved to its Jackson Street location, near the Episcopal church, before the conference. It had been dedicated in September. The church was an attractive building with a tall steeple that could be seen from far off. It was about the same size as the Episcopal Church, which still sits on Jackson Street. It had seating space for three hundred people. The location of this church is now a parking lot for an auto dealer on Jackson Street. The Methodist preacher had services every two weeks. The Presbyterian minister, Rev. Chamberlain, used it the other two weeks of the month. The Presbyterians built a slightly larger church a few years later on Thibodaux Street.

This big event may have marked the high point of Methodism in the 19th century in south Louisiana. H.N. McTyeire said after the conference that he knew of "no ministerial work in the Louisiana Conference or any Conference that exceeds this, either in the opening prospects of large success, in intrinsic importance, or in moral sublimity." But, the membership and outreach of Methodism in Terrebonne and Lafourche Parishes in the 19th century was restricted to the English speaking population. Growth was slow and membership was small. The area had always been predominantly French-speaking Catholics. Since the early Methodist preachers couldn't speak French and the Catholic religion still held a good deal of control, this early attempt at the establishment of Methodism by-passed the majority of the population. It would be years before Methodists went to the people with a French-speaking pastor.

1852

The area's first Bible society was started in 1852. The Bible Society of Lafourche and Terrebonne Parishes had its first meeting on January 18 at the Methodist church in Thibodaux. The ministers and several members of the area's Protestant churches (Episcopalian, Presbyterian, Methodist) made up the membership. The Episcopalian, Rev. Leonidas Polk, was selected as chairman. George Guion was elected president. Members from Terrebonne Parish included Joseph Semple (the vice-president), J.C. Potts, and Rev. William Ferguson. The funds generated from the society were to be used to distribute the Scripture to people of the two parishes.

The Lafourche/Terrebonne area was placed under the jurisdiction of the New Orleans District in 1852. The presiding elder was John C. Keener. The Houma/Bayou Black Mission consisted of 33 whites and 233 blacks. The pastor was Rev. William Ferguson. It was referred to as the Houma and Bayou Colored Mission in the records. The Bayou Black Mission consisted of six plantations and the church in Gibson. Rev. Ferguson collected $260 from the Bayou Black Mission for 1852.

Rev. Ferguson wrote to the Advocate to describe the third Quarterly Meeting for the Houma/Bayou Black mission. It was held at the Tigerville church and lasted from September 23 to October 3. Fourteen people "embraced religion" and sixteen people joined the church. The old members were also uplifted. All ages and classes were affected. Father and son ... mother and daughter ... planter and worker were seen to kneel together at the altar. The presiding elder, Rev. Keener came to preach and will long be remembered by the people. Two local preachers, Rev. Rolls and Rev. Knight, assisted in the services.

Rev. Ferguson was married this year. On November 24, he married Harriet P. Jarvis of Tennessee. Rev. Lewis Reed performed the ceremony in Thibodaux.

The pastor assigned to Thibodaux was Robert J. Harp. He arrived from the Baton Rouge Circuit at the young age of 22. He ministered to 64 whites and 62 blacks. A Sabbath School class was organized this year in Thibodaux. The Thibodaux church was finally completed in March.

The Colored Mission of Napoleonville and Lafourche was served by Lewis A. Reed. Its membership consisted of 7 whites and 345 blacks, with 316 children under religious instruction. His collections along his circuit of eleven plantations came to $283 for the year.

A revival was held in Thibodaux that lasted three weeks from September to October. Rev. Harp accepted 40 new members into the church and 30 people were converted. This was the first real "revival" that the area had seen.

> Rev. Robert James Harp was born in Lawrenceburg, Tennessee on April 29, 1829. He felt the call to preach at the young age of fourteen. He was licensed and preached at the same age. His ministry was to last for seventy-one years. He transferred to the Louisiana Conference in 1846, when he was appointed to the Caddo Circuit. He started Shreveport's first temperance society. He moved southward, serving Alexandria and Baton Rouge before being appointed to Thibodaux. While pastoring a church in New Orleans, he married Miss Agnes Pennington on September 23, 1869. They had three daughters.
>
> He was a true example of the itinerant minister, having served around the state over a distinguished career. He was an intelligent, unselfish, and gentle man. One of his family said that he could not even think evil. He lived the thirteenth chapter of first Corinthians. It was said that if Methodist ministers could ascend to sainthood, Rev. Harp would be placed at the head of the line. He passed away in Shreveport on July 24, 1914.

1853

The appointments stayed the same for 1853. The black memberships increased slightly, while the white membership declined a bit. Membership at the Houma/Bayou Black Mission decreased for both (15 whites and 201 blacks). This is the last time that Houma is mentioned until 1860. The Houma circuit was served from time to time by preachers from surrounding circuits, most probably the Thibodaux/Lafourche circuit. Bishop James Andrews visited a number of churches in south Louisiana this year, but did not go to Houma. He did stop at the Thibodaux church and had a meal at Francis Mead's home, which was located in Schriever. This was the first time a Methodist Bishop had entered Terrebonne Parish.

Lewis Reed, appointed to the Lafourche Colored Mission, informed the Advocate that he had lost access to five of the twelve plantations he had been serving. The "slave membership" was down to 700 souls.

Rev. Harp wrote to the Advocate to inform the readers that the Thibodaux church had a big July 4th celebration. It was hosted by the Sunday School.

Many people in the area, including Methodists, died in a yellow fever epidemic in 1853. One of those, Mr. M.P. Ziles, left $1000 to the Thibodaux Methodist Church.

1854

Rev. Ferguson left Houma in 1854 to serve Plaquemine and Point Coupee. The Houma church was served by Lewis A. Reed, who was appointed to serve Lafourche and the Bayou Black Circuit/Mission. His appointment serviced 50 whites and 882 blacks.

Hazael A. Sugg was appointed to replace Rev. Harp in Thibodaux. While waiting for Rev. Sugg to arrive, Rev. Keener appointed B.F. Alexander to take charge of the Thibodaux Station. Rev. Alexander, who grew up and preached in Kentucky, had just transferred to the Louisiana Conference. Rev. Sugg was busy in Caddo Parish; he married Mollie Kate Cooke, of Tennessee, in January of 1854. He did make it down to the area soon after. The records show that he performed a wedding in Terrebonne Parish at the end of February. The Thibodaux Circuit was serving 45 whites and 64 blacks at this time.

Before he left, Rev. Robert Harp started a church journal of records. He tried to put earlier records as he could find them, back to 1832. This record book was kept through 1889, though there are many gaps and omissions. Since the Houma and Gibson churches were placed on the same circuit as Thibodaux (especially after the Civil War), the only records we have of the 19th century Terrebonne Methodists are found in this book. This is the book that has previously been referred to as Rev. Harp's church journal. It was "rediscovered" in the Gibson church in 1976. It is now located in the Archives at Centenary College in Shreveport, though a transcription of the material was done and is available in several libraries.

While looking though the records of this journal, you will notice that just about all of the names are Anglo-Saxon. The 19th century Methodist church never reached the predominantly French-speaking population. This is probably why it virtually disappeared in the 1880's.

Rev. Harp had been working on the history of the Methodists in south Louisiana. Unfortunately, all of his notes were burnt in a fire. If not for that fire, we would have an extensive history of 19th century Louisiana Methodism from someone who was there.

1855

Lewis Reed continued to serve the Bayou Black Circuit/Mission for 1855. But this year, Donaldsonville was added to the circuit and Jesse Fulton was sent to help him. Together, they ministered to 39 whites and 671 blacks.

The mission extended 140 miles from St. Mary Parish to St. James Parish. It includes eighteen plantations. They are able to reach the largest plantations about once a month. At a quarterly meeting at Bayou Black, Dr. J.C. Keener suggested that a series of chapels be built along the circuit by the blacks. Funds were soon collected and construction of chapels on Bayou Black and Bayou Lafourche began.

> Rev. Jesse Fulton was born in Baton Rouge on March 24, 1831. He was converted in childhood. His first marriage was to Miss Mary A. Phipps on February 18, 1858; his second was to Mrs. Lucy A. Brown on December 4, 1865. He was admitted to the Louisiana Conference in 1855. He served as junior on the Lafourche and Bayou Black Circuit. He passed away in Meridian, Texas, on August 19, 1897.

The Thibodaux and Napoleonville Circuit received a different preacher for 1855. Samuel Hawes was appointed to minister to the 46 whites and 82 blacks on the circuit.

> Rev. Samuel Hawes was born in Louisiana on October 5, 1819. He was born again in 1840. He was admitted on trial into the Mississippi Conference in 1842. He spent most of his ministry in southern Louisiana.
>
> Rev. Hawes was a gentle man ... full of mercy. Like Rev. Reed, he had experienced the loss of loved ones recently. He came to the area as a widower. His wife, Rachel, had died after giving birth in 1852. His mother died of yellow fever while Rev. Hawes was in Thibodaux in 1855. He remarried shortly after to Miss Sarah A. Cain. His own life, after serving this circuit, did not last very long. On his deathbed, a friend asked him "whither goest thou." He answered "to a better world." He died of typhoid fever on July 2, 1860, two months after the birth of his daughter, Zipporah. Zipporah would later have a daughter named Ella, who will be discussed later.

By 1855, there were nine different branches of the Methodist Church in America. Over 80% of the 1,672,517 American Methodists were in two branches (the Methodist Episcopal Church - 783,358; Methodist Episcopal Church, South - 579,525). But the Methodist Episcopal Church had 4,579 ministers, while the Methodist Episcopal Church, South had only 1,672 ministers. Most of the 10,599 Methodists in Louisiana were members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. So they were serving more people per pastor (1 pastor = 84 members) than their northern counterparts. There were also thousands of local ministers who preached more or less every week, when the official ministers couldn't make it. It is interesting to note that 1,255,897 of the Methodists were Anglo-Saxon. Almost none of them were French ... the predominant population of southern Louisiana.

A Houma Ceres newspaper article states that services were held at the Houma Methodist Church on November 13-16, 1856. Communion was served on Sunday, the 16th. Those attending included the preacher in charge, Lewis Reed, and the Methodist pastor from Thibodaux, Samuel Hawes.

To illustrate the sharing of the Methodist building, a notice in the Houma Ceres on December 6, 1856 advertised that the Episcopal pastor from Thibodaux would be preaching the next week at the "Protestant Church" in Houma.

The end of 1856 brought a change in ministers for the Houma and Lafourche Circuit. While Jesse Fulton remained, Lewis Reed left and was replaced by Thomas L. Beard. They served 43 whites and 575 blacks.

The fourth quarterly meeting for the circuit was held at the Houma Methodist church on the third weekend of January. Rev. J.B. Walker of New Orleans presided.

A notice was placed in the Houma Ceres on May 23, 1857 that stated that services would be held at the Methodist church at 11 a.m. on May 31. Services would continue every other week for the rest of the year.

Rev. Hawes remained in Thibodaux. A revival was held, with the help of Rev. C.K. Marshall and Rev. J.B. Walker. It yielded two conversions and five who joined the church.

At the end of the year, Rev. Hawes was replaced by Jephthah Landrum, who served through 1857. The Thibodaux church had 23 white members and 50 black members. It seems as though things were not going well. Rev. Landrum notes in the church journal that it was "a year of toil, trial, and temptation ... without any visable marks of God."

> Jephthah Landrum was born in Alabama on August 25, 1825. He entered the Louisiana Conference in 1854. After getting a law degree from the University of Louisiana in 1861, he served as a chaplain in the Confederate Army. He married Miss M.C. Butterworth on January 21, 1864. After a two month illness in 1887, he passed away. On his deathbed, his wife asked him, "Does Jesus save you now?" He replied, "Yes, that he does." Raising up his hands, he exclaimed "Up, up, up, rejoice!" and ceased to breathe.

1858

N.A. Cravens was appointed to the Lafourche and Bayou Black circuit for 1858. There was still one Sabbath School. The circuit's library contained two hundred volumes. Besides the membership of 41 whites and 540 blacks, he also preached to 1599 slaves.

In a letter to the Advocate in October, Rev. Cravens stated that the congregations are "large and attentive ... though no general revival has been realized." In the third quarter alone, 132 were baptized and 61 were received on probation.

Thibodaux received M.D.T. Fly as their pastor for 1858. He served 20 whites and 50 blacks on the circuit. The Thibodaux library contained four hundred books.

By 1858, there were eighty-one Sabbath Schools in Louisiana. This was the term they used for the Sunday Schools. The conference that year emphasized the importance of these Sabbath Schools as a principal arm of service of the church. Sunday School would impact other areas of the church. The Sunday Schools would play an important role later on in raising money for missions. Sunday School teachers needed to have a solid foundation in Biblical accounts and teachings. Certificates and pins for good attendance and memorization of Bible verses became standard.

1859

Rev. Cravens stayed with the Lafourche and Bayou Black Circuit/Mission for 1859. The membership declined to 32 whites and 228 blacks. The only thing that increased was the number of books in the library ... from two hundred last year to six hundred this year.

Rev. Cravens was living in Napoleonville at this time. Rev. Cravens and his wife Elizabeth had a one year old son, Joseph, who died in 1859. His mother-in-law, Elizabeth Barnett, died the next month.

The church in Thibodaux received Robert A. New. He arrived in Thibodaux on Tuesday, September 19. He preached his first sermon at the Thibodaux church the next day at 7 p.m. He was late in arriving, due to the sickness and death of his mother in Louisville, Kentucky.

Rev. New went about getting things back to normal, as the lay people had let things go in the absence of a minister. He led an old-fashioned Love Feast on November 27. Class meetings and Sunday School are now attended with more regularity. Rev. New notes in the church journal that a number of Catholics have been attending the Methodist church affairs.

The Thibodaux church ministered to 27 whites and 99 blacks. The Thibodaux church contained a library of 300 books.

Rev. Cravens was replaced at the end of the year by Stephen J.

Davies and William McBeath. They were now serving 44 whites and 276 blacks. Rev. New continued to serve at Thibodaux. He reported a membership of 35 whites and 110 blacks.

1860

The next year, 1860, saw Rev. McBeath assigned only to the Houma and Tigerville Circuit. Rev. McBeath was born in Kentucky. He passed away in December of 1861 and was buried near Houma, Louisiana. He was the first Methodist minister buried in Terrebonne Parish. The first census of Houma was taken in 1860. The population was 429.

Rev. Davies was appointed to help Rev. New on the Thibodaux and Napoleonville Circuit. While the Thibodaux church membership remained level, the Lafourche and Bayou Black Circuit continued to lose members. The first mention of financial aid was $150 apportioned for Houma and Tigerville. In the third quarterly conference held in Thibodaux in 1861, Rev. Harp (who was serving nearby) mentions that there were only a few people giving money. If this kept up, they couldn't afford to support the preacher.

There were eighteen parsonages in Louisiana at this time, and only four in the New Orleans District. There were still none in the Terrebonne/Lafourche area.

1861

The year 1861 brought the beginning of the Civil War. Since many Louisiana Methodists were black, this was to greatly affect the church. Of Louisiana's 14,680 Methodists in 1861, 6152 were black. In Houma/Tigerville, there were 9 whites and 109 black members. The Thibodaux/Napoleonville circuit had 45 whites and 100 black members. Stephen J. Davies served the Thibodaux/Napoleonville Circuit.

Matthew D. Thomason was appointed to serve Houma and Tigerville for 1861. He had spent the last few years serving the Mississippi Gulf Coast and Alabama. There was one Sabbath School on this circuit. There was also a library of one hundred and fifty books. Along with the regular congregation, he preached to 250-1090 slaves. Rev. Thomason later left and went to Alabama to serve as a chaplain in the Confederate Army. He died in Mobile, Alabama, in 1864.

Several other Louisiana Methodist ministers, such as Joshua F. Scurlock (went to Texas), Charles J. Hallberg (went to Mississippi), and James L. Wright, served as chaplains and missionaries. They held services, distributed Bibles and literature, and Methodist newspapers during the Civil War.

1862-1865

Robert R.R. Alexander was appointed to cover the Thibodaux and Houma circuits for 1862 and 1863. Rev. Alexander was born in

Kentucky in 1831. He died on April 11, 1867, in Jefferson, Texas.

The area was left unsupplied in 1864 and most of 1865. There were no appointments to the area because they were "without preachers because in the enemy's hands."

1866

Then, at the end of 1865, the Thibodaux and Houma circuits welcomed Robert Hardie, Jr. He arrived in Thibodaux on Wednesday, December 26. He found the church in the possession of blacks who had joined the African Methodist Episcopal Church and were holding the property in their name. Remember, the Thibodaux church had been without a minister for a couple of years. It took a bit of work, but possession of the church was returned to the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, on December 28. The African Methodists built two churches of their own in the next ten years.

Rev. Hardie preached his first sermon on the morning of December 30. He also held a watch meeting at midnight of New Years' Eve. After being without a pastor for so long, he notes that the congregation's spiritual condition was "truly lamentable." They showed complete indifference towards church obligations. After a bit of work, he was able to get the congregation under control. He reorganized the Sunday School in January. It now had two teachers and four scholars. It had broken up during the war.

Since 90% of the Houma circuit was made up of blacks, the outlook for the Houma Methodist Episcopal Church, South looked bleak. The city of Houma would not receive its own appointed minister from the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, for over forty years.

You may note that we have been following the history of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South ... since it was the only active branch of Methodism in south Louisiana from 1845 to 1865. We will now take a break from the history of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and will cover the history of the "northern" branch ... the Methodist Episcopal Church ... in our area.

THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

On Christmas day of 1865, the first session of the Mississippi Mission Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church was held. Rev. Richard King Diossy, who had just transferred from the Methodist Protestant Church, was appointed as the presiding elder for the Opelousas District. Although the Methodist Episcopal Church was not a "black" branch of the Methodist Church (Rev. Diossy himself was "white"), it aimed its work at the blacks of the south. Since the Civil War had ended, they were leaving the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and the Methodist Episcopal Church wanted to reach out to them. Rev. Diossy noted that the ministers of these two Methodist branches were opposed to his efforts in the district.

The first pastor appointed to the Thibodaux and Houma circuit was William Murrell. By the end of 1866, there were 340 members on the circuit and two churches were being completed.

> Born about 1814 in South Carolina, William Murrell was the son of a slave (Rebecca) and her "master", Peter Murrell. While a boy, William was owned by a youth named Toby, who helped him learn to read. While he was with Toby, William was converted and felt called to the ministry. He was later sold and brought to New Orleans in chains as a young man. William was bought by a Mr. Wolridge, a minister of the gospel, who allowed William to improve his education and to preach. He preached in African Methodist and Methodist Episcopal, South churches. He married Comfort Caroline Cokee in 1851. After the war, Rev. Murrell joined the newly formed Mississippi Mission Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church.
>
> It was under Rev. Murrell's leadership that the first Methodist Episcopal churches were built in Houma and Thibodaux. In 1868, Rev. Murrell was elected to the State Legislature by the Republican party and served several terms. Because of his bold and determined style of speech, he was known in the Legislature as "the wild man from Lafourche." During his stay on the Thibodaux/Houma circuit, where they say his word was law, he never accepted money for his preaching services. After fifty years of preaching in the Methodist Church, Rev. Murrell passed away on February 7, 1892.

In 1866, under the authority of Rev. Richard King Diossy, property was bought in Thibodaux and Houma. The property in Houma consisted of lots 1 and 2 on block number 5. It was a 60' by 96' piece of land on the southeast corner of Canal Street and Wood Street. At that time, the Barataria Canal ran through town between Barataria Street and Canal Street. The church, known as the Wesley Methodist Church, was completed by 1867. The cornerstone for the original church was a gift from W.J.M. Price. The original church was replaced in 1889 by a white frame steepled church with colored glass windows. The second church occupied the corner for eighty years. The Evening Star Lodge #1 donated a piece of property on Canal Street (next to the original property obtained in 1866) to the Wesley Methodist Episcopal Church. This increased the amount of property owned by the church.

The ringing of its church bell was a familiar sound to the people of Houma. After the effects of time and hurricane Betsy had damaged the building, it was torn down and replaced with the present church in 1969.

In the same year, property was purchased in Thibodaux to be used for a Methodist Episcopal Church and a school for "free persons of color." It was bought from Rachel Tabor, a "free woman of color", for $175. The property was part of lot 56, bordered by Cider Street on the south, Narrow Street on the east, and President Street on the west. The church was named the Calvary Methodist Church of Thibodaux. Construction was completed in 1867. It was rebuilt in 1885 under Rev. G.W. Lacey.

The Methodist Episcopal Church, with churches in Thibodaux and Houma, had 410 members by the end of 1867. In 1868, Rev. Murrell left the area and was replaced by Rev. Henry Grimes (in Thibodaux) and Rev. J.M. Vance (in Houma).

The year 1869 brought Rev. Grimes back to Thibodaux, while Rev. John W. Wesley replaced Rev. Vance in Houma. Rev. Diossy, who was still the presiding elder of the Opelousas District, noted that there was much animosity and persecution towards the ministers and the church. It was often not safe for him to travel to some parts of the district.

In January of 1870, Rev. J.W. Wesley was reappointed to the Houma church (which had 128 members), and Rev. Robert Hodge was appointed to the Thibodaux church (which had 839 members).

> Rev. Hodge, born a slave in Virginia in 1807, was a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church for 47 years. He was one of the original preachers of the Mississippi Mission Conference back in 1866. On his deathbed he said, "I am waiting for the Lord and feel as a soldier mustered out of service going to his reward."

The Methodist Episcopal Church in Thibodaux welcomed Rev. William Murrel back as their pastor in 1871. Austin Kennedy was also appointed to the circuit. Rev. J.W. Wesley was reappointed to Houma.

Though Murrell and Kennedy returned for 1872, Rev. Wesley was replaced by Rev. Samuel Davage.

Under the leadership of Rev. Kennedy, a congregation of the Methodist Episcopal Church was incorporated in 1872 at Terrebonne Station (now called Schriever). Like the Wesley Church in Houma, most members were black even though this wasn't a black branch of the Methodist Church. The trustees included Henry Johnson, Fredrick Bud, Anthony Hill, Ledger Hill, Edmond Brown, and Robert Capen. They took a ninety-nine year lease on a lot from George D. Craigen, a New York native who owned Magnolia Grove. It was a 100 foot square lot along the left bank of Bayou Terrebonne between Magnolia Grove and Dumas Plantations. A small church was located on the property. By the end of the first year, the Schriever church had 267 members.

A congregation of the Methodist Episcopal Church, North was incorporated on May 27, 1897 at Schriever. People in this congregation included Nathan Pugh, Alfred Nicholls, Dennis Johnson, Aaron Robinson, Ezekiah Robinson, Robert Smith, and William L. Brooks. This was probably a re-incorporation of Rev. Kennedy's church.

> Austin Kennedy, the original pastor of the church, worked in a local sawmill. After being admitted on trial in 1870, he served most of his ministry in the Terrebonne area. He passed away in 1895 and was buried in Schriever.

The Methodist Episcopal Churches in Terrebonne Parish saw a number of preachers come and go for the rest of the century. The church at Schriever was pastored by Austin Kennedy (1870-1874, 1877-1879), Robert Hodge (1875), E.P. Royal (1876), George Washington (1880-1881), Willis Carr (1882-1883), A.J. Pickett (1889), H.J. Wright (1890), Charles Monroe (1891), Stephen Green (1892-1893), H.C. Gair (1894), A.J. Proctor (1895), and W.S. Harris (1896). Over the years, the membership of the Schriever church went from 146 (1873) to 130 (1889) to 80 (1896).

The church at Houma, called the Wesley Methodist Church, was pastored by John Sparks (1873-1874), Henry P. Taylor (1875-1877), Aristide E.P. Albert (1878-1879), Edward Fields (1880-1881), A.J. Ford (1882-1883), Frank D. Bowers (1889-1891), Robert Anderson (1892), Sanders Carroll (1893), H.T.O. Abbott (1894-1895), and D.M. Seals (1896). Over the years, the membership in Houma went from 75 (1873) to 265 (1889) to 89 (1896).

Another Methodist Episcopal Church was formed in Terrebonne Parish in 1875. Like the other Methodist Episcopal Churches founded in 1866 and 1872, this congregation consisted of mainly black members. The articles of incorporation for the "Houma Methodist Episcopal Church" were filed on June 22, 1875. The pastor was Henry P. Taylor. The board of trustees included Charles Lang, Jack Hick, Robert Williams, Samuel Singleton, Louis Wright, Smith Thomas, John Murray, and Claiborne Wright.

> Rev. Henry P. Taylor was born in 1825 in South Carolina. He was converted at age thirteen. Though born a slave, he was able to receive an education with the free children. He came to Louisiana in 1845 and helped erect Wesley Chapel in New Orleans. Rev. Taylor transferred from the African Zion

Connection to the Louisiana Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1873. After serving in New Orleans for two years, he served in Houma for two years. Rev. Taylor was remembered as a fine vocalist and Christian gentleman. While serving in Houma, Rev. Taylor passed away on January 15, 1877. He was survived by his second wife and his three children. He was buried in Terrebonne Parish.

A New Yorker, George D. Cragin, donated a piece of land to the Methodist Episcopal Church, Live Oak, on February 15, 1882. It was located on his Dulac plantation twenty miles below Houma. The Dulac area was called Live Oak at the time. The Board of Trustees included Townsend Jackson, Daniel Jones, James Johnson, John Hubbard, Richard Wilson, and Manuel Smith. The pastor was Rev. Henry C. Armstrong of the Methodist Episcopal Church. The membership stood at 15 for the first year. After one year, the membership had increased to 24 and a church was in use. The pastor for the second year (1883) was C.H. Claiborne. From the mid 1880's until the end of the century, the Dulac church was usually served by the pastor from Houma. The membership in those years never rose above 10 people. Pastors of the early 1900's assigned to Dulac included T.H. Roberson (1902), Nolan McNeal (1904), James Christian (1905), and D. Sutton (1906). After the plantation shut down, the church gradually died away.

A group of citizens bought a piece of property from R.R. Barrow in 1887. The land was in Bateyville (Beattieville), an area that used to be Mr. Barrow's Batey Plantation. The area is now in the town known as Gray. The trustees at the time of purchase were J.P. Brown, William Hickman, Harry Williams, Andrew Jackson, and Thomas Santu, Sr. This church was a part of the Methodist Episcopal Church. There were now four Methodist Episcopal Churches in Terrebonne Parish.

The first mention of the Bateyville (Gray) church in the Conference Journal came in 1890, when H.J. Wright was appointed to serve Schriever and "Beattieville." The property for the church was bought from R.R. Barrow in 1887. The congregation was organized as the Mt. Vernon Methodist Church and was incorporated on this property in 1906. Michael Smith was the president at that time.

The early 20th century saw another series of pastors in Terrebonne Parish. Some of the pastors in Houma were I.R. Scott (1901), H.C. Gair (1902), M.S. Goins (1903-1904), W.S. Harris (1905), D.J. Price (1907), F.T. Chinn (1913), and H.A. Sorrell (1919). Some of the pastors in Schriever were Edward Powell (1901-1902), C.W. Kersaw (1903-1904), and Thomas Williams (1905-1907).

A report from the 20th session of the South New Orleans District Conference shows that local appointments included P.C. Colton (Houma), H.A. Sorrell (Schriever), and R.E. White (Gray). The Houma church had 107 members, 4 local preachers, 2 exhorters, and 1 school. The pastor's salary for the year was $150. The church building was in good condition. They raised $239 for the year.

With the merger of 1939, the northern and southern branches of the Methodist Episcopal Church were joined. Now, let us return back to 1866 and the history of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South.

1867-1868

Houma was now included in the Thibodaux Circuit. Philo M. Goodwyn was appointed to the Thibodaux and Houma Circuits for 1867. This was the same Philo M. Goodwyn who had served here many years before. He served the circuit for two years. In both circuits, now combined into one again, there were 48 whites and 100 blacks. The circuit now consisted of Thibodaux, Napoleonville, Houma, Tigerville. Rev. Goodwyn preached one Sunday a month at each place. During the reconstruction period, which lasted from 1865 to 1877, the Methodist church building was used as a public school during the week.

> Rev. Goodwyn was born in 1820 in New Albany, Indiana. He moved to the South in 1837. He was soon converted and joined the Poydras St. Church in 1840. He was admitted into the Mississippi Conference the next year. His first appointment was to the Lafourche Circuit in 1842. He returned to the area to serve from 1867 to 1868. Rev. Goodwyn had a sprightly disposition and an active temperament. He served as a true circuit rider around the state of Louisiana for over thirty years. It was said that his character was without stain; he lived to do good. In the end, the hard itinerant life had worn him down. Rev. Goodwyn passed away on December 15, 1892 in New Orleans.

Records for Houma and Tigerville now start appearing in Rev. Harp's church journal. The members for 1867-1868 are listed. Sixteen names are listed for Houma and four for Tigerville. The only record that actually mentions the Houma church itself is the baptism of Mrs. Elmyra Delarand Helmick, which took place in the Houma church on July 5, 1868. She was baptized by Rev. Goodwyn.

Of the 9,831 Louisiana Methodists, only 1,983 were now black. Despite the loss of the black members, the Methodist Episcopal Church, South began to grow. This was largely due to the efforts of the lay people, both male and female. This was because there was a shortage of pastors. This shortage continued for a number of years. This led to many circuits being combined or left to be supplied. This is what happened in the Houma area.

For 1868, Philo M. Goodwyn was again appointed to the area, now known as the Thibodaux Circuit. The Houma Mission was included on this circuit. Its membership is listed as 31 whites. Blacks are no longer listed in the conference statistics.

1869

James L. Chapman replaced Rev. Goodwyn the next year on the Thibodaux Circuit. The membership of the Thibodaux Circuit is now given as 41 whites.

The Christian Advocate published an article at that time that "outlaws" certain activities that Methodists were expected to stay away from. These banned activities include going to or participating in: a gambling saloon, a brothel, dancing, Mardi Gras, and the theater. In fact, the preacher is told to turn away from church anyone who has gone to a theater.

To combat the competition from the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Methodist Church, South did away with the probation period for new members, allowed for greater lay representation, and allowed preachers to stay for four years in an appointment. The itinerant minister was becoming a little less itinerant.

1870

In 1870, James L. Wright was appointed to serve the 22 whites still remaining on the Thibodaux Circuit. Rev. Harp's church journal lists twelve members for the Houma church for 1870. Rev. Wright preached his first sermon in Thibodaux on February 6. The sermon was on "Be there in the fear of the Lord all the day long ... Proverbs." The first quarterly meeting of the year was held in Houma.

> Rev. Wright was born in Russellville, Kentucky on September 21, 1822. He was converted in New Orleans in February of 1842. He later married Miss Mary A. Grant. They raised a large family. He was admitted on trial in the Mississippi Conference in December, 1845. In 1848, he transferred to the Louisiana Conference. He served a variety of charges around Louisiana. In 1865, he was a chaplain in the Confederate army.
>
> As a pastor, he always met his obligations. His preaching was very "hortatory". He didn't like exegetical preaching, and rarely tried it. His plea to sinners to repent was delivered with tremendous power. Rev. Wright liked to sing a hymn before delivering his sermon. His singing alone was enough to bring a tear to the eye of many listeners. Rev. Wright was best known for his gift of prayer. He passed away in Ruston in 1903.

1871-1872

The Thibodaux Circuit was combined with the Algiers Circuit later in 1871, It was left to be supplied by Lewis A. Reed in 1872. Since Lafourche (and Terrebonne) were on a larger circuit, this meant that the visits from the pastor were even less frequent. On the entire circuit, there were only 56 whites.

In January of 1872, a Louisiana conference for black Methodists was formed. Two years earlier, the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church had been formed.

1873-1878

Thomas Mullett was appointed to serve Brashear City (now called Morgan City) and the Lafourche Mission for 1873. He arrived on February 8. He found the Thibodaux church in poor condition. There were only eight members on the church roll. While the circuit was left "to be supplied," many of the members transferred to the Episcopal Church. Rev. Mullett's schedule was to preach at Tigerville on the first and third Sundays of each month, at Thibodaux on the second Sunday of each month, and at Houma on the fourth Sunday of each month. He went to Tigerville twice a month because of the "anxiety on the part of the people for preaching."

Rev. Mullett was appointed to the same area for 1874. He mentioned in the journal that he has no horse and can't afford to buy one. He has to travel by foot from church to church. By this time, there were only 15 members on the entire circuit.

The circuit was left to be supplied for 1875.

The next appointment came when Lewis A. Reed returned to the circuit for 1876. The circuit now included Donaldsonville, Napoleonville, Thibodaux, Houma, and Tigerville.

Rev. Reed formed one Sunday School and put together a library of two hundred and fifty volumes. The membership now stood at 24. After one more year, he had built up the membership to 81.

In 1878, however, Rev. Reed moved on and Lafourche was left to be supplied. There were 78 members.

1879

Lafourche and its 64 members were still left to be supplied in 1879. There were four churches on the circuit, valued at $6000. This number undoubtedly included the churches at Houma, Gibson, Thibodaux, along with one other location.

Rev. William J. Picot, a French Canadian and preacher in the Wesleyan Church, joined the Louisiana conference and was appointed to the Attakapas French Mission in 1879. After a bit of hesitation by the Conference (he was married to a fifteen year old girl from Haiti), his appointment was approved. He concentrated on the Iberia Parish area, though it is known that he preached from Lafayette to Morgan City. He preached in houses, out in the open, in ball rooms ... wherever he could find a group of people. The Catholic priests were not too happy that he was speaking to the French. In fact, the priest in New Iberia forbid his members to attend Rev. Picot's services. After one year, Rev. Picot reported 72 members, 1 local preacher, 15 adults and 6 infants baptized, 1 parsonage ($700), 3 Sunday Schools, 6 teachers, 69 scholars, $16 collected for Sunday Schools, and $400 paid to missions.

By the end of the year, he was asking for money to support another pastor from Canada who could speak French. In a letter to Rev. J.D. Harper, Rev. Picot mentions that with an additional man, they could even reach Terrebonne Parish. But money was hard to come by for the French Mission field. His letters to Rev. Harper in 1879 were full of encouragement for the missionary work. But in 1880, the topic of his letters was largely concentrated on his need for funds.

Picot did not stay long. In 1880, he was dismissed from the Conference for "gross immorality." Once again, the French Mission field was abandoned.

1880-1881

Thomas Hall Jones was officially appointed to the 63 members of the Lafourche Mission in 1880. He had already spent much of 1880 serving as supply for the Mission. Since Rev. Jones only stayed a short while in 1881, the Lafourche Mission was without a minister for most of 1881. Evidently one or more of the churches had fallen into disrepair, because they had to spend $100 for church repairs that year.

> Rev. Jones was born in Montgomery, Alabama on September 12, 1859. He moved to New Orleans in 1861 and was converted at the Sea Shore Camp Ground in the summer of 1876. From the first hour of his conversion, he knew he was meant to preach the Gospel. He attended Centenary College, though he was bothered by ill health. After spending much of 1880 serving as a supply for the Lafourche Mission, he was admitted to the Louisiana Conference in December of 1880 and was appointed to the Lafourche Mission. After only serving a couple of months, the disease that had plagued him for several years crippled his health. He returned to his home and passed away on April 4, 1881. His untimely death robbed us of a promising minister of the Gospel. The Lafourche Mission was therefore without a minister for most of 1881.

On April 20, 1881, Hugh O'Rourke donated a lot of land along Bayou Tiger to the Methodist Church. It was a 60' by 100' block of land inside O'Rourke's property around Gibson. The pastor of that congregation, which was Methodist Episcopal Church - Zion Connection, was Barnabas Callaway. The Zion Connection was a black branch of the Methodist Church that had separated in 1822. He stated that if a church wasn't built, the land would revert back to him. The records do not state whether or not a church was ever built on the property.

1882

Charles F. Stivers was appointed to the Lafourche Mission for the year 1882. The membership was down to 60 whites. The offering for the year came to $250.

Rev. Stivers was born in October, 1860 in Bastrop, Louisiana. He was converted and joined the Methodist Church in 1878.

1883

The Lafourche Circuit was down to 35 whites in 1883. Rev. P. Calvin was appointed pastor.

Robert Smith donated a piece of land on Little Caillou to the African Methodist Episcopal Church. Rev. J.D. Haynes is mentioned on the documentation.

1884

J.F. Scurlock was appointed to minister to the 36 whites on the circuit for 1884. There was one Sunday School with 12 members. The library had "disappeared". Perhaps Rev. Reed took them with him when he left. At least some of the books were left in the area. Miss Ella Hooper of the MacDonell School had stated she possessed some books with Lewis Reed's name in them. The circuit now had three churches valued at $3000.

> Rev. Scurlock was born in Jackson County, Alabama in 1834. He was saved at a camp meeting in 1850. He joined the Memphis Conference. After hearing Rev. Robert Harp make an appeal for ministers to come to Louisiana, he transferred. Rev. Scurlock was a diligent student of the Bible who loved to read. He also loved to preach. Although bothered by disease for many years, his preaching was instructive and original. He was a pious man who prayed often. He served as a chaplain in Texas for the Civil War. He passed away on April 23, 1902 in New Orleans.

Rev. Stephen Davies, Jr. wrote an article to the Advocate in 1884 on the French Mission field. He noted that he was asked to go to the area at the last conference. No one had been to the area since Rev. Picot's dismissal. Rev. Davies couldn't speak French, but he agreed to go to the Cypremont area. He had limited success. Those who were converted were very zealous and can "say amen with true Methodist fervour." He made an appeal for the appointment of someone who could speak their language. He referred to the area as a "Macedonia in our midst" where help was needed badly.

1885-1888

J.F. Scurlock remained on the Lafourche Circuit for 1885, but the membership had dropped to 28. Also, the Sunday School had been dissolved. There was only one baptism (an infant) for the entire year.

When Rev. Scurlock was moved to Algiers/Gretna, Lafourche was left to be supplied for the next few years.

In the spring of 1885, the Presbyterian church (in Houma) on School Street that had been built in the late 1850's fell apart.

For the next few years, the Presbyterians used the Methodist church for their services.

The Lafourche Circuit was left to be supplied for 1887. It was under the jurisdiction of the Opelousas Circuit. It's too bad that it didn't stay in the New Orleans District. New Orleans kept perfect records for the year, while the Opelousas District didn't keep any records. If there were better records, we might have a better idea of what was going on at the Houma church.

The Thibodaux/Houma area is not mentioned in the appointments for 1888. The population of Houma at this time was 1200.

Rev. Harp's church journal lists six members in the Houma church in the mid 1880's. Of the six, Sarah Wallis and Rebecca Wallis died, and the church lost track of Mary R. King and Mariah Hornsby. This left only Mary E. Robertson and Sarah Prevost as members of the Houma church.

In January 1888, the Houma City Council improvement committee noted the "dangerous condition" of the Methodist Church building. Mayor M.F. Smith ordered it to be removed or it would be condemned because it was in such bad shape. A fire had occurred in Houma the previous December. They were looking at the old church as a fire hazard. Since the Houma church had dwindled down to two members, it was decided to sell the property.

At the first quarterly conference of 1888 at Morgan City, Rev. S.S. Keener, the presiding elder, was directed to sell the church in Houma and to use the funds to build another church in the district.

Under the authority of Rev. Keener, the building and property were sold on March 19, 1888, for $650 to D. Albert Chauvin. The money was put into the district account and used to build a church in Crowley. Mr. Chauvin sold the property two years later to Mrs. Mary Booth Fulton. It was Mrs. Fulton who had the church torn down and replaced with a millinery and dry goods business. Mr. D. Albert Chauvin bought the building a few years later and lived in it for a number of years. He sold it to the Houma Council of the Knights of Columbus, who in turn sold it to Mr. J.H. Thatcher in 1929. Mr. Thatcher tore down the building and build a hotel on the property. Today, the hotel is used as an office building.

So, does this mean that there is a gap in the history of Methodism in Houma/Terrebonne? Of course not; the Methodist Episcopal Churches were still around. Also, the Methodist Epicopal Church, South, in Gibson still received occasional visits from the pastors to the west from Morgan City & Berwick.

1889

At the request of Rev. C.F. Evans, the presiding elder of the New Orleans District, Bishop Hargroves appointed Rev. James Matthew Henry to serve the Thibodaux Circuit until the annual conference. He arrived in Thibodaux on July 1, 1889 and found a church building and six members. He also found a church building and seven members at Gibson.

> James Matthew Henry was born on January 15, 1853. He came to Louisiana straight out of Vandebilt University. He was a quiet, but friendly man. He passed away on October 11, 1921.

Rev. Henry began preaching with small congregations ... about 40 people. After a while, the number increased to 75 to 140 people. The prayer meetings drew 50 to 65 people. He did not try to revive the Sunday School. He raised fifty dollars in collections, just enough to cover the traveling and church expenses.

The last entry in Rev. Harp's church journal was the 1889 registry of the church at Tigerville (Gibson). It consisted of seven members: Jane E. Nash, Emeline Carline, Roso Moody, Nannie Moody, Phillip Walthers, John Walthers, and William Walthers. The church would be served on an irregular basis from now on by the pastors from Morgan City or Berwick.

At the yearly conference, held in December, 1889, Rev. Henry was appointed to supply the Morgan City and Patterson circuits. No one was appointed to the Thibodaux/Houma area, though it is possible that Rev. Henry made his way back to the area on occasion. A few records from the Gibson area can be found in the Morgan City registers in the 1890's.

Other Protestant denominations also continued to use the Gibson church. It was used by the Episcopals for quite a while. The Episcopal Church records in Houma show records from the church, known to them as St. Anna's Mission, dating from 1880 into the early 20th century.

The Gibson Methodist Church was also used as a school before a school building could be built in Gibson. During the Civil War, Union soldiers used the small building as a hospital.

1890-1897

No one was appointed to the Thibodaux or Houma areas for 1890. E.T. Denson was appointed to serve the Thibodaux and Houma Circuit for 1891. He was stationed in Thibodaux. The Thibodaux church still showed 15 members. There was also one Sunday School with 55 members. The only church on the circuit was the one in Thibodaux, valued at $2000.

Rev. Denson had raised the membership to 25 whites and 1 black, though the Sunday School had dropped to 18 members. Thibodaux and Houma were left to be supplied for the next two years. Subsequent years, from 1893 on, do not even mention the circuit.

The Board of Missions for the New Orleans District stated in the 1892 Conference Journal that "in Lafourche we have a church, but no preacher; in Terrebonne - possibly a house, but n o preacher." The Thibodaux church was never resupplied. It was sold at the beginning of the 20th century. The Methodist church in Thibodaux wasn't restored until 1949 under Rev. John Redmond.

It is at this time that the Epworth League was formed in Louisiana. This organization was for the youth. Louisiana's first chapters began in 1894. The Houma area would not form a chapter until the church was "resurrected" in the next century.

In the 1894 Journal, the French Mission shows up and is listed as "to be supplied by Joseph Berwick." Finally, H.W. Wallace of New Iberia was appointed to the French Mission for 1896. The 1896 Journal lists the French Mission "to be supplied by O.B. Seiward" for 1897. It also states that there were 57 members in the French Mission in 1896. The French Mission at this time was considered to be the area around New Iberia and St. Martinville. The area would expand to include the Terrebonne/Lafourche area in 1907.

1898-1900

The conference for 1898 was held in January of that year. Martin Hebert (of St. Martinville) asked to be sent to the French. He was admitted on trial to the French Mission for 1898. Armed with two sermons in French, he began his first year in ministry to the French. There were still 57 members and no church. By the end of the year, the membership had dropped to 43, but there was now a church (at Isle Aux Cannes) in the Mission. He only accepted two people on profession of faith. A local "Creole" was licensed to exhort during the third quarter. Looking back, Rev. Hebert said that his biggest accomplishment that first year was meeting and marrying his wife, Nettie. His salary for this first year was $210.

The church built in 1898, which measured 28' by 38', should have been built twenty years ago when Rev. Picot was in the area. He had gotten the cypress lumber to build the church, but it was never built. Some of the lumber was even used to build a dance hall.

Rev. Hebert stated that his biggest problem was not the Catholic Church, but the drinking and dancing. The Methodist Church opposed drinking and dancing, which were an important part of the lifestyle in south Louisiana. To join the Methodist Church meant that they had to give up drinking and dancing. To many, this was harder than turning away from Catholicism.

The French Mission was left to be supplied by Joseph Berwick in 1899. Though they didn't tell him why, Rev. Hebert was moved to the Plaquemine/Brulee Circuit. No one was appointed to the French Mission for 1900. But the next year, Martin Hebert was back.

Martin Hebert was born in Bell City, Louisiana on May 29, 1874. He grew up in the Catholic church. As a youth, he was converted. He went to Lake Charles College and taught for a while. He heard the call to preach, but didn't have the money for an education to prepare him for the ministry. He and his brothers raised a crop and used the proceeds to pay for their schooling (his brother Willie became a minister in the Methodist Episcopal Church). He was licensed to preach at age twenty-three and was admitted on trial in 1898.

He married Miss Nettie Clarissa Kingsbury, of Missouri Valley, Iowa, on July 18, 1898. The two of them had seven children, all of whom were born in parsonages. Nettie was a talented teacher and musician, and would always lend a hand when needed. She was the model pastor's wife ... maintaining a Christian family while still supporting her husband's ministry. When accolades were poured on Rev. Hebert, he knew that he was able to accomplish what he did due to the efforts of his beloved wife, Nettie.

Approximately two-thirds of his ministry was dedicated to the French people of south Louisiana. He traveled across the bayou country by horseback, boat, buggy, wagon, on foot, and by bicycle. He often came to Terrebonne Parish by train. He served the French Mission for much of the first quarter of the 20th century. He filled in as the Houma pastor for half of 1916. He was the presiding elder of the Houma and French Mission District form 1920-1923. He also served a variety of charges in other parts of the state.

Simply put, Martin Hebert WAS the French Mission in Louisiana. He was the "emblem of the Protestant French" in south Louisiana, as Dr. B. Joseph Martin once said. He recognized the need to bring the Methodist message to the people in their own language. Many of the Methodist churches in south Louisiana owe their existance to his efforts.

The message that Rev. Hebert preached was simple and straight-forward. He wasn't interested in theological subleties and fancy religious opinions. He offered the Gospel to everyone and offered it to them equally.

Rev. Hebert passed away on October 9, 1961. He left behind a legacy unequalled in south Louisiana Methodism.

Back in Terrebonne Parish, we find Robert E. Martin. He was a person of deep religious nature; but he was not satisfied with the Catholic religion. His father had bought a Bible, a rarity in the hands of Catholics in those days. By reading his Bible and praying, he was converted. On October 3, 1899, he organized The Spiritualist Society of Bayou Blue. It was near Matherne Canal, on the left bank of Bayou Blue. This area is also often referred to as Bourg or St. James. Their first "church" was an old hay shed that was converted into a meeting place. They later built a chapel. Services were conducted in French. The officers were: Robert Martin, president; Albert Martin, vice-president; Teles Matherne, secretary; and Clay Savoie, treasurer and medium.

1901-1906

Rev. Hebert was working out of New Iberia. At Lydia he found families that had converted to Methodism when Rev. Picot had served the area. He also found a Methodist family, the Prince family, at Cypremort. He used these three families as a foundation for congregations at both towns. By the end of 1901, there were 119 members in the French Mission. Another church was built at Cypremont.

Revivals were held around the area, especially in the summer. Rev. Hebert notes that the church could not hold all of the people who came to hear the Word. The services were in French, with some singing sometimes done in English. He noted that it was slow work to convert the Catholics, who had never known of any other religion.

Three years later, the membership had risen to 140, and there were two churches in the Mission. There were now 30,000 Methodists in Louisiana. This is over twice as many as there were just twenty years ago.

Rev. Hebert kept writing to the Advocate trying to raise funds for the French Mission. An article in a 1905 issue of the Christian Advocate stated that we must not forget about the "unsaved at our own door" ... referring to the French people of south Louisiana.

If we may, let's take a look at the Gibson church in the early 1900's. Methodists in Terrebonne Parish were being served by the pastor from Morgan City. Rev. H.S. Johns, pastor at Morgan City, noted in the fourth quarterly conference in 1903 that he had been preaching at Gibson and Donner. He also mentioned that he had "officiated at many funerals of which no record has been kept, from Belle Isle to Houma." The people of Gibson and Donner even guaranteed to pay $500 if a man would be assigned to their circuit.

Rev. S.S. Keener noted at a 1907 quarterly conference that the Gibson church needed a new roof. In 1909, Gibson was mentioned as one of the stops on the Morgan City/Berwick circuit. In 1910, the pastor noted that "at Gibson, La., congregations have been better through this year than last" and "the church at Gibson has been painted." Morgan City's pastor in 1914, C.C. Weir, wrote that "there are two mission points that should be reached more thoroughly: Donner and Gibson" and that "there is a vast territory up and down the river that should be evangelized." Several records of Methodists in Terrebonne Parish can be found in the registers of the Morgan City church during this time.

1907

While Rev. Hebert was working in the New Iberia area, something was happening in Terrebonne and Lafourche Parishes.

Robert Martin, previously mentioned as the leader of the Spiritualist Society of Bayou Blue, was given a list of twenty-one different religious denominations by a friend, Mr. W.P. Martin. This was the first that Robert had ever heard of any religion besides Catholicism. Shortly after this, the Spiritualist Society received a visit from Rev. Martin Hebert.

Rev. Hebert was trying to extend the scope of the French Mission to the parishes of Terrebonne and Lafourche. He came into the area in 1907 to conduct a meeting. The Bayou Blue Society was impressed by his message. Robert Martin showed him the list of religious denominations and said, "Now which is your Church?" Rev. Hebert pointed to Methodism.

"What do the Methodists believe?" asked Robert Martin.

"Well, we believe in the Bible." replied Rev. Hebert.

"So do we." answered Mr. Martin.

"We believe in conversion." said Rev. Hebert.

"So do we." answered Mr. Martin.

"We believe in sanctification." said Rev. Hebert.

"So do we." answered Mr. Martin.

"We believe in keeping ourselves separate from the sin of the world." said Rev. Hebert.

"So do we." concluded Mr. Martin. "I didn't know we were Methodist." Subsequently, the entire Society converted to the Methodist religion. Rev. Hebert later said that one of the happiest days in his life was when he opened the church doors at Bayou Blue and received sixty-four applicants. For many years, it was the largest single group to join the Methodist Church at one time.

The Bayou Blue and surrounding communities would make great contributions to Methodism in Louisiana. The Martin family alone contributed six men who became pastors and/or local preachers. Robert E. Martin later became licensed to preach and became a local elder. Two of his sons, A.J. Martin and A.M. Martin, also became full-fledged ministers in the Louisiana Conference. They preached around south Louisiana. For a while, A.J. was a conference evangelist. Kleibert F. Martin, Robert's brother, served as a local preacher in Terrebonne Parish. The third brother, Anatole D. Martin, was a pioneer of the French Mission.

Rev. Anatole D. Martin began his ministry on the Lafourche Mission in 1914. Born on April 23, 1882 in Bayou Blue, he was a member of the Spiritualist Society of Bayou Blue, which was led by his brother Robert. As a young man, he and his brothers operated a syrup mill and a saw mill. He married Agnes Matherne in 1902.

Anatole Martin decided to follow his brother Robert and entered the ministry. He started the first Protestant church in a schoolhouse in Raceland in 1914. Over the next couple of decades, he served churches along the bayous of Lafourche and Terrebonne Parishes ... Pointe au Chien, Little Caillou, Dulac, Griffin, Lockport, Labadieville, and Golden Meadow. Some of these little churches no longer exist. The church at Griffin was later demolished and the wood used to build the church at Thibodaux. There was no church at Labadieville ... they used to meet at a Mr. Richard's house. To get to Dulac, he would take a boat from Point aux Chene to meet a Mr. Savoie. Mr. Savoie would pick him up in a pirogue and take him to Dulac, where they would hold services in private homes.

He preached at many more locations. His daughter, Maggie, would often accompany him and play the pump organ. Later, during the Depression, several of these churches were closed. Some would reopen in subsequent years, but by then the other Protestant churches had picked up most of the non-Catholic population. His preacher's salary at the time was $500 a year ... not much to support a wife and seven children. He bought a horse in 1917 to get around.

Due to the lack of funds ... his salary had stayed at $500 for six years ... Rev. Martin decided to quit the ministry in 1919. He soon changed his mind and was back in the pulpit.

In 1920, he moved his family to Lydia to serve in Iberia Parish for two years. In 1922, he moved back to Terrebonne Parish and was once again serving the churches "down the bayous" ... Dulac, Grand Caillou, Bayou Blue, Pointe au Chien.

A few years later, Rev. A.D. Martin was left without an appointment. The new presiding elder said that there was no room for uneducated preachers in our district ... and Rev. Martin had only gone through the fourth grade. Now, remember, Rev. Martin had founded and served churches throughout Terrebonne and Lafourche Parishes. Rev. A.D. Martin was an excellent example of the fact that education is not necessarily what makes a good minister of the Gospel. Rev. Martin had common sense, zealousness, and a sincere desire to bring Christ to his French neighbors.

It didn't take long before the presiding elder realized that the French churches were not growing. The presiding elder called upon Robert Martin and said, "tell Brother Anatole I want to see him ... the French churches aren't doing well." Robert answered, "I could have told you that ... but you tell him yourself." This conflict was one of the reasons that later sent Rev. A.D. Martin to another Protestant denomination. Another reason was the lack of money. The Baptist preachers got more money. Rev. Martin had always struggled to make ends meet.

In the 1930's he took correspondence courses to study the ministry. In 1936, he was ordained as a Baptist minister. He held the first Baptist services in Dulac. The Baptist services were conducted on a church that floated on the bayou on top of a barge. He pastored the Bayou Dularge Baptist Church from 1938 to 1948, when he had to retire because of his health. He soon joined the staff of the MacDonell School and later resumed serving the Methodist Church as a local preacher. He continued to preach when asked to fill in. He was honored on the television program "Crosswords" in 1954 for his ministry to God and to his fellow man. In his later years, he would walk from his home on Goaux Avenue to the courthouse every day to visit. He passed away on February 27, 1966.

Anatole's son Dr. B. Joseph Martin became a prominent Methodist minister and educator. Being the son of a local preacher, he had to drop out of high school three times to work to help raise money. Friends such as Rev. F.J. McCoy encouraged him to continue with his education; and that he did. He obtained B.A., B.Th., M.Th., Ph.D., and law degrees; and he served in prominent positions at several colleges around the country. He completed his career by serving as pastor in Lafourche and St. Mary Parish churches such as the Raceland church, which his father founded in 1914. Dr. Martin has said that education has been his life, but the ministry has been his avocation.

There were several other preachers to come out of the early French Mission area. C.J. Thibodeaux and G.A. LaGrange were educated at the MacDonell School, became preachers, and served the local French charges. They were from Labadieville. Rev. J.A. Knight, Rev. E.V. Duplantis, and Rev. E.C. Dufresne were also natives of the French Mission area who later served the area.

1908

At the Crowley District Conference in May, 1908, Rev. Martin Hebert and his helpers presented the need of the French Mission. After his appeal, the members of the Conference pledged $250 towards the cause of the French Mission. At this same meeting, J.C. Duplantis, Robert E. Martin, Samuel R. Henderson, and William V. Falcon were admitted on trial. All of these men would go on to serve the French Mission. The first parsonage in the area was built in 1907 in St. Martinville for Rev. Hebert.

In the 1908 report by the Committee on Missions, it was resolved that the church employ as many people as possible in the French Mission work. They would also agree to raise funds to help pay for these workers. It was noted that the General Board of Missions had undertaken to support Rev. Hebert in his work.

In a June 30, 1908 article to the Advocate, Rev. Martin Hebert wrote an article to report on the French Mission field. The French Mission had been expanded to include the area from Vermillion to Lafourche Parish. He related the story of his latest visit to Terrebonne Parish.

He had to travel eighty-five miles by train and twelve miles by buggy to reach the church at Bourg (Bayou Blue). The church, which had been built the previous year, just installed new pews. After visiting with six families that afternoon, he held a service for fifty people that night. It was an "old-fashioned experience" meeting in which a dozen members witnessed as to how they were saved. Six new applications were made for church membership.

Another service was held in the morning at 11 a.m. One of the gentlemen at the service was a life-long Catholic, about fifty years old. He had been reading from a New Testament borrowed from a neighbor who had bought it from a colporter. A colporter was a seller of Bibles and other religious material. The gentleman had traveled ten miles to learn more about what he read. After the sermon, he invited the ministers to come and preach at his house, which they promised to do on the next trip.

It is interesting to note that this man had never read a Bible before. Catholics of this day were not allowed to read the Bible on their own. One gentleman interviewed for this book actually remembers seeing a Catholic priest tearing up Bibles that had made their way into people's hands. Thankfully, the Catholic church has changed its position since then.

That afternoon, Rev. Hebert traveled twenty miles by buggy to Dulac. Rev. R.E. Martin and Rev. William V. Falcon had recently started work here. Rev. Martin was starting his first year as a Methodist minister. Rev. Falcon, a young French preacher from Baton Rouge, decided to work the French Mission field, also.

That evening a service was held in a dance hall to a packed crowd. He was dissappointed that he couldn't hold services the next night. The hall was needed for the bi-weekly "hop." Mention was made to the dance hall owner that the building would be put to good use as a permanent meeting place. A service was held the next day at 11 a.m.

Rev. Hebert was approached by a man who had a dance hall but was no longer in the business. He offerred the use of his building. So Rev. Hebert moved to the ex-dance hall. A service was held in his building that night to a filled room. Many attending expressed a desire to be saved. After the service, Rev. Hebert was told that the attendance at the "hop" at the other dance hall was extremely small. The owner said that if the Methodists kept on coming, he would be forced to go out of business.

A Sunday morning service was held the next day. Rev. Hebert returned to Bayou Blue and arrived in time to hear Rev. J.C. Duplantis delivering his sermon to a congregation of 100. Rev. Duplantis had just finished his education at Ruskin Cave College. Six people joined the church and fifty-six members received communion.

Rev. Hebert mentioned the efforts of two others in the area. One is an agent of the American Bible Society who had sold three hundred Bibles in the last three months. Most of these people were reading their first word of scripture. The second person is Rev. O. Derouen. He was a native-born French-speaking Creole who was a devout Catholic until age thirty. Working for the American Sunday School Union, he has organized eight Sunday Schools among the French in the last four months.

Working in the western area of the French Mission was Rev. S.R. Henderson. Though he had been there only two months and doesn't speak French, things looked promising.

Rev. Hebert concludes the article by saying that someone is needed to serve Terrebonne and Lafourche Parishes. This person would also need a motorized boat to enable him to reach the people. It would not be long before his plea would be answered.

At the Louisiana Conference held in December, Martin Hebert was returned to the French Mission for the ninth consecutive year. He finally received help. Rev. C.V. Breithaupt was appointed to minister to the 60 members of the French Mission in Houma (and Bayou Blue). Robert Martin would also be helping Rev. Hebert. The French Mission had grown to 120 members, with three church buildings.

The Conference Journal also notes that C.V. Breithaupt, F.J. McCoy, and others would continue on trial. They hadn't passed the exam for their first year of classes.

CHAPTER 4

METHODISM "RETURNS" TO TERREBONNE PARISH

Rev. Clyde Vernon Breithaupt: 1909-1916

Rev. C.V. Breithaupt arrived in Houma in February of 1909. He would spend the next seven and one half years building up the Methodist church in Terrebonne Parish.

> Rev. Clyde Vernon Breithaupt was born on December 11, 1881 in Jena, Louisiana. He remembered as a youth back in 1892, how he walked barefoot through the swampy terrain ... this is the same type of land that he would later travel through in spreading the Gospel. Even though his family moved back to north Louisiana in 1896, he never forgot the Cajun environment. Before he entered the ministry, Rev. Breithaupt would have never even lived in a town without a Methodist church. Now it would be his job to bring a Methodist church into just such a town.
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> At the age of twenty-three, he married Margaretta Hundley on June 5, 1905. Shortly thereafter, he passed the Bar in Louisiana. He then acquired a degree in theology from Vandebilt University. Both degrees were attained through correspondence courses. The Breithaupts had five children, two of which were born while they were in Houma. After serving Houma, he was transferred to Alexandria to serve as state superintendent of Sunday Schools. As field secretary, he had to travel for most of the year. Since he felt he had to stay near his family, he accepted a position as a local pastor for a number of years at the Pineville Methodist Church. To make ends meet, he worked in his father-in-law's automobile dealerships. He sold Studebaker, Packard, Hudson, Hupmobile, and Essex automobiles. But Rev. Breithaupt was a preacher at heart, and not a businessman. He went bankrupt and had a nervous breakdown.
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> The Breithaupts moved to Phoenix, Arizona, because they thought its dry climate would be good for Rev. Breithaupt's health. He sold life insurance until his retirement in 1948. From 1926 until 1939, he taught a men's Bible class in the Central Methodist Church in Phoenix. He never lost his talent with the Word of God; they say the class seated two hundred and there was seldom an empty seat to be found.
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> After having a stroke around 1960, Rev. Breithaupt returned to Alexandria. He lived there with his nephew until he died on March 13, 1963.

Rev. Breithaupt wrote his first letter to the New Orleans Christian Advocate in March of 1909. He described the area to which he has been assigned. The population of Terrebonne Parish at this time was 38,000. Houma itself had 6,000 members, twice as many as six years ago. The parish was rich in natural resources ... chief among them being sugar cane, corn, oysters, oil, and cypress lumber. The numerous bayous are filled with hundreds of boats, big and small. A $43,000 high school was to open next year. Most of the parish approved a tax to go towards education. There were two Protestant churches in Houma. The Episcopal church had a membership of 155 and reaches 500 people throughout the parish. Their Sunday School had an enrollment of 200. The Presbyterian church had a membership of about 40 and a small Sunday School. There were eleven Roman Catholic churches and six priests in the parish. The only Methodist Church in the parish was the Bayou Blue Church, with 60 members.

Upon his arrival, Rev. Breithaupt held the first services at a private home one and a half miles from Houma. His "congregation" was made up of Catholics. He held his first service in the city of Houma on February 28. He rented the Hook and Ladder fireman's hall for the occasion. Several citizens had asked him to preach in locations around the parish. He tried to get to them as time permitted. Rev. Breithaupt noted that there are old men with grandchildren who have never heard the story of Jesus. He urged that a prime objective of the Louisiana Conference should be "More Men and More Money for French Mission."

In April of 1909, Rev. Breithaupt wrote to the Advocate and noted that the Methodist church would have to be established if they hoped to see the return of Methodists who had transferred to the Episcopalian and Presbyterian churches in the absence of a Methodist church.

Rev. Breithaupt organized a Sunday School, an evening song service, and cottage prayer meetings. He was a gifted young man who attracted large crowds. Rev. Breithaupt was a friendly man; everyone liked him. He had an excellent singing voice.

As mentioned, one of the first places used as a "church" in Houma was the Hook and Ladder fireman's hall. For each service, he had to hire someone to move the fire-fighting equipment outside before the service and inside after the service. He had two dozen Methodist hymnals, bought with his own money. He also had his Bible. He had to spend $5 out of his own pocket for gasoline for the boat he used to get around the parish.

The Hook and Ladder Hall was built in 1888 on northeast corner of Church Street and Verret Street. It was named because of the miniature hook and ladder on the roof ... the tools of the firefighter's trade. The Hook and Ladder Hall was used for public school work on weekdays, dances on Saturdays, and church on Sundays.

The salary of a Methodist preacher at this time was not exactly overflowing. A small amount would be taken in from collections. But Houma was still a Mission church ... and would remain so for years to come. It would receive money donated from other churches. Sometimes the preacher would receive donations of materials to help him. One gentlemen remembers eating supper at the Breithaupts. The meal was omelets, because that's all that they had ... someone had "paid" the preacher in eggs. In fact, many new preachers were welcomed with a "pounding". Members brought a pound of sugar, a pound of rice, and so on.

Rev. W. Winans Drake, in appealing for money for the Houma Mission, stated in a June 24, 1909 Advocate article states that reaching the French people of southern Louisiana is "one of the most important steps in the recent history of Louisiana Methodism."

Rev. Drake would write again in 1909 to emphasize the importance of bringing the Gospel to "our French neighbors." There were over a quarter of a million French-speaking citizens in south Louisiana. While they are Roman Catholic, they were not in practical touch with the Church and were without religious instruction. He noted that early efforts into this field by Rev. Martin Hebert showed great promise. Since more and more of the children were going to school and were learning English, more of the population could be reached. Churches needed to be started in towns like Houma and Thibodaux.

Dr. Nelson, of the Mission Board, visited the area around that time. With his help, a boat was purchased for Rev. Breithaupt to use to travel around the field. Rev. R.E. Martin was assisting him as a field missionary. Three men, Rev. Hebert, Rev. Breithaupt, and Rev. Martin, covered the entire French Mission field. Rev. Breithaupt concentrated his efforts on the eastern end of the French Mission; Rev. Hebert concentrated on the western end; Rev. Martin helped out in both areas. Sometimes the three worked together. A 1909 meeting in Henry was treated by the services of all three men.

Meetings were held around the parish wherever space could be found. Services were held at that time in a dance hall, a school, and private homes. The only church in the area was a "commodious" house of worship built by the congregation at Bayou Blue. A couple of young men in the area were even called to preach. The people were buying the colporter's Bibles at the rate of 200-300 copies a month. In a letter written to the Advocate, Rev. Hebert sent out an urgent call for help. He asked for prayers, $2000 for a church in Houma, and help in building churches at Montegut, Esther, and Kaplan. Rev. Breithaupt had received eighteen to twenty members into the congregation at Montegut, which is in Terrebonne Parish.

Terrebonne Parish suffered one of its worst hurricanes in September of 1909. Rev. Breithaupt wrote an article in the Advocate to inform everyone of the damage from the hurricane. Rev. Breithaupt had been around the parish in the boat recently bought for him. The stories from the southern part of the parish were horrific. He tells of one family riding the roof of their home as it was swept away. One by one, they watched as each of their five children slipped away into the waters. Another man was observed holding on to his wife by the cloth of her dress. Wave after wave passed over them. Looking down, the man saw that all he had hold of was a piece of cloth ... the dress had ripped and his wife was buried somewhere under the water. After the storm, people could be seen combing the parish ... looking for the remains of their loved ones. One man, who had been out of town, returned to find his wife and all of his children dead. He buried them with his own hands. About three hundred parish residents were killed, though none of our Methodist members perished in the storm.

Although the loss of life was not as great in the northern part of the parish, the property damage was great. Almost every building in the parish was damaged. Every one of the camps at Sea Breeze was blown away. The only Methodist church in the area, at Bayou Blue, was completely demolished. Using what is available from the old lumber, the church was soon rebuilt.

Rev. Breithaupt would travel around the area on his two cycle Harley Davidson motorcycle. Sometimes Mr. Johnny Foolkes (the brother of the woman who later sold the church some property) would drive Rev. Breithaupt around to his preaching locations when the weather was bad. He later got his own car, a Studebaker, though it was burnt in a fire in his garage. There were shell roads in town, but dirt roads elsewhere. He would travel to Bayou Blue (where there was a church building and a large congregation), down each of the bayous of Terrebonne Parish, and anywhere else that he could find a place to preach. For example, one of his preaching places was Palmer's Store, located near the present Catholic retreat, Lumen Christi, on Highway 311. He would preach out of the store itself. It was not unusual for Rev. Breithaupt to show up at one of these places all covered with mud.

The Houma charge of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South incorporated itself on November 12, 1909 for ninety-nine years. The witnesses included Clifford P. Smith, Robert H. Sanders, James W. Warren, Joseph L. Melancon, Joseph H. Pullen, George J. Gueno, E.A. Smith, J.A. Robichaux, and C.V. Breithaupt.

The same day, the church purchased four lots (lots 1, 2, and 3 on block 59) from Joseph H. Pullen for $650 cash. They were on the southeast corner of High St. and Gabasse St. Mr. Pullen had just bought the property from Emile Daigle in September. Other names mentioned on the documentation were Clifford P. Smith (president), Joseph A. Robichaux, Robert B. Butler, and C.V. Breithaupt. By the end of the year, they had also raised $200 towards the building of a church.

No mention was ever made of an attempt to build a church on the property. It was used only as a parsonage. A triangular piece of lot 3 was sold to Ellis Dupre in 1915. In 1921, lots 1, 2, and 3 were sold to Alfred J. Hebert. The three lots were sold to raise money to pay for the Red Brick Church that was being built. The house on the east side of the property (lot 4; 814 High St.) was used as a parsonage for over 40 years. This was Terrebonne Parish's first Methodist parsonage. It was sold in 1953.

The men mentioned in the 1909 purchase were prominent members of the community as well as the church. Mr. Clifford P. Smith had come to Houma and started a cypress lumber business. He was an important member of Rev. Breithaupt's church. He was also a prominent member of the community for years. He served as foreman for the Hook and Ladder Fire Company for a while. His daughter, Helen, would later have the pulpit in the new church built in 1956 put in memory of her parents.

Joseph H. Pullen withdrew from the Episcopal Church this year to join the Methodist Church. In his letter of withdrawal, he notes that when he came to Houma in 1894 there was no Methodist Church in town. Like several other Methodists who had come to Houma, he had been attending another Protestant church. His family later moved to northern Louisiana.

Robert B. Butler came to Houma in 1898 after passing the bar exam. He practiced law in Terrebonne Parish for fifty-eight years. He served as a representative and as a senator in Baton Rouge. He was a judge for eighteen years. He even ran for lieutenant governor at one time. Judge Butler was also known as a pioneer for the Boy Scouts in the area. He was never without his cigar, except when he was on the bench. Besides serving in a number of civic organizations, he also taught the men's Sunday School class at the Methodist Church for years. He passed away in 1965 at age ninety-five.

The 1909 Conference held in December notes that C.V. Breithaupt and F.J. McCoy ... traveling preachers ... were elected deacons. The Houma charge had grown to 91 members. The Sunday School had 76 members. It also says that Rev. Breithaupt was assisted by two local preachers and that he had four societies on the charge. Seven infants were baptized this past year.

Rev. R.E. Martin was the junior preacher assigned to help Rev. Breithaupt at the Houma Mission for 1911. He was working out of Bayou Blue. The Houma Mission now had 130 members. By the end of the year, it had 152 members. They had rebuilt the church at Bayou Blue. There were 9 Sunday Schools in the Mission with 250 members. The Mission Board gave Houma $1000 for 1911. The first women's group, the Women's Home Mission Society, was formed this year with 18 members. The Mission Board was still supporting the Houma Mission.

Moving the fire-fighting equipment in and out of the Hook and Ladder Hall became bothersome. So Rev. Breithaupt rented a room on Main Street. It is known that the Opera House was sometimes used. The Opera House was a two storied building with a six-sided tower on the southeast corner. It was built in 1896 by the volunteer fire department. They stored fire fighting equipment downstairs. There was a bell in the tower to ring in case of fire. The post office was also located downstairs. Speeches, stage shows, and dramas were presented on stage. It served as a movie house for early silent movies. Someone, such as Mrs. Daisy Ray, would play the piano during the movies. The Opera House was torn down in 1933 to build a post office. A restaurant occupies the old post office today.

Rev. Walter G. Harbin came to Houma to preach for two weeks in March. One of his services, for men only, was held at the Opera House with an attendance of between 250 and 300 men. Considering there are only about 60 Protestant men in this entire city of 6,000, the turnout was impressive. Rev. Harbin preached on "A Man Wanted." There were eleven accessions at this meeting alone. Everyone in town knows that the same hall where we hold our services is a good place to find spiritual joy as well as earthly pleasure.

Still, using the Opera House meant sharing the room with other functions. So, Rev. Breithaupt rented a room elsewhere on Main Street. It was on the third floor in a building that now holds a business called Palais Royale. This third floor has since burned down. There was a large room in which the services were conducted. People sat on benches. Rev. Breithaupt kept his gym equipment ... weights, parallel bars, etc. ... on the same floor. He would invite the boys to work out with him. But, he wouldn't preach to them at these exercise sessions. Still, the priest got upset with the Catholic boys for mingling with that "Protestant" preacher. When the church later moved to the Masson house, the gym equipment was set up there.

Getting these people to switch from Catholicism to Methodism is not as simple as switching between two Protestant religions. The Catholic religion has been with these people since they came to this country. It is a part of their culture. Still, Rev. Breithaupt said that you don't build up Methodism by cutting down Catholicism. Rev. Breithaupt noted that the Methodists' job was to "preach the simple story of Jesus and his love, the awfulness of sin, the power of God to save; you do not have to spend your time condemning Romanism .. preach Jesus, the Lord will do the rest."

Rev. Breithaupt wrote to the Advocate in 1911 about the lack of education in the pulpit. He felt that since people were becoming more educated, an uneducated preacher was doing them a disservice. He felt that some of the congregation could feed him spiritually.

Rev. Hebert went down to the Bayou Blue church to help Rev. R.E. Martin with a four day meeting in March. Ten people joined the church and the "entire congregation was greatly revived." Three of the families had traveled forty miles by water to hear the gospel. Rev. Martin noted at the time that he needs some sort of transportation to travel the great distances along the circuit. His salary is so small that he cannot even afford to buy a pony.

Houma's first deaconess, Miss Eliza Iles, was sent to work in Houma and surrounding areas in 1912. She often assisted Rev. A.D. Martin in his rounds. The role of the deaconess was to organize clubs and classes and to do the house-to-house visiting. They were able to reach many people that the pastor could not get to. Miss

Iles was an attractive woman with a pleasant, outgoing personality. She served the area until 1915, when she was replaced by Miss Kate Walker. Miss Iles later became a missionary to Africa.

The official position of deaconess had been established at the end of the 19th century. To be a deaconess, a woman had to complete the proper training and be certified by the Woman's Board of Home Missions. At the turn of the century, the salary of a deaconess was $10 a month plus board, travelling expenses, and car fare. She would receive a one month vacation each year. The official "uniform" for a deaconess consisted of a black dress, a bonnet with white lawn ties, and a white turnover collar and cuffs. It was necessary for the deaconess to pursue a continuous course of study and reading.

By the end of 1912, Rev. Breithaupt had received 55 new members since the last conference. When he went to Bayou Blue (where Anatole Martin and Rev. R.E. Martin had been working) in October, he received 14 new members there and 3 more nearby. At the beginning of November, Rev. Booth came by to help with a meeting in Houma. Rev. Breithaupt noted that almost all of the new converts were formerly Catholic.

At the December conference, the Mission Board allocated $500 for the Houma Mission for the next year. The records show three churches in the Houma Mission charge. The seven Sunday Schools now have 375 members and 21 teachers. The Woman's Home Society had 22 members. The first youth groups were formed in 1912. The Senior Epworth League had 13 members, and the Junior Epworth League had 9 members.

The Sunday schedule at this time consisted of Sunday School at 10 a.m. and Preaching Service at 11 a.m.

A meeting was held in April 1913 that lasted for two weeks. The services were conducted by Rev. Breithaupt, though Rev. Hebert came down to preach for six of the days. On a typical night, Rev. Breithaupt said, seven people joined the church.

The progress in the French Mission field was not going unnoticed. In 1914, Martin Hebert and C.V. Breithaupt were commended for their labors ... Hebert for his work as a French missionary and Breithaupt for completing six years as pastor of the church in Houma. After visiting the area, Dr. E.H. Rawlings (Education Secretary for the General Board) wrote "In our whole church, there seems to me no work more important or more promising than the work being done in the Houma Mission." Mrs. R.W. MacDonell, in a letter to Rev. Breithaupt, wrote of the Houma Mission ... "you have a wonderful record."

It has been mentioned that you had to give up dancing and drinking to become a Methodist. The workers in Houma decided that they needed some sort of social activity. In January of 1914, the Bayou Blue church had its first Epworth League social. It was held at a Mr. Brunet's house. Fifty young people were in attendance.

The social started off with singing hymns. Then they enjoyed several games, such as a needle threading and sewing contest and mock fortune-telling. Popcorn pralines were served for the snack. Miss Eliza Iles told the story of Ruth. The evening ended with more singing of hymns, this time in French.

On July 22, 1914, the church bought a piece of property (80' by 100') on the southeast corner of Goode St. and School St. from Mrs. C.J. Masson (Albina Foolkes) for $2800. They paid $10 cash and the rest, $500 per year, at 8% interest. The witnesses included Clifford P. Smith, Joseph H. Pullen, and Robert B. Butler. Mrs. Masson had purchased this lot from Elizagone Duplantis in 1906, who had purchased it from Miss Marie Boudreaux in 1900, who had purchased it from Mrs. Marie Barnardo in 1891, who had purchased it in 1868 from the widow of Sidney M. Goode.

The house on the property was used as a church for the next seven years. Evidently it was painted green, because it was known as the "Little Green Church." It was also known as the "Tabernacle." The front porch was enclosed for more room and was used for Sunday School classes. Rooms in the back of the house were used for offices and a kitchen. It seems as though the Methodists always needed a kitchen.

Rev. Breithaupt wrote to the Advocate to impress the need of the Houma Mission. He also thanked the Women's Board for providing a parsonage. Assisting Rev. Breithaupt were five exhorters and a local preacher. They are raising $100 from the field. But this still wasn't enough. He notes how one of his helpers had to sell his own cow to pay off $35 of the church's debt. He made an appeal for $500 so that Rev. A.D. Martin could preach full time.

Rev. Breithaupt stated that the best revival Houma ever had took place in April of 1915. Rev. A.F. Vaughan of Franklin, La. assisted in the services. There were nineteen accessions, a number of reclamations, and a spiritual quickening of the church. After the meeting was over, Rev. Breithaupt was joined by Rev. Louis Hoffpauir for two weeks of preaching in the field. Rev. Hebert also came down for a few days in April.

Rev. R.E. Martin mentioned later in 1915 that he had received seventeen new members into the church at Bayou Blue. He also reminded everyone of the problems of a local pastor. He had to farm for six days out of the week to provide for his family. Then on Sundays, he had to provide for everyone else spiritually. The poor crops of the last three years had hurt both his and the church's finances.

The presiding elder of the Lafayette District, J.J. Hoffpauir, stated that the French Mission, under the leadership of Rev. Hebert and Rev. Breithaupt, was developing more rapidly than at any time in its history.

A storm at the end of September destroyed the only Methodist church in the area, at Bayou Blue. This was the building that had been blown down in 1909, but was rebuilt. It was worth about $600.

Rev. Anatole Martin and Rev. Robert Martin were in a meeting nine miles below Lockport when the storm hit. No one was hurt. There were twenty to thirty members in that area. All twenty-five members of the church in Fayport lost their homes. The twenty-six members in the Raceland area fared better, though the wind did a lot of damage. Although loss of life was small, the property damage was immense.

Rev. Anatole Martin received six members into the church at Fayport on Sept. 16, 1915. Fayport was a community located between Bayou Blue and Lockport.

As of October 4, Rev. Breithaupt and Rev. A.D. Martin had received seventy people into the church.

Rev. Breithaupt wrote about the area at this time. "There are more than 330 people living on every inhabitable square mile of dirt in this territory, and when you look into the faces of 100,000 white people, you have seen 99,000 who are claimed by Romanism. The bayou stretches out for eighty miles with one front yard touching the other, the entire distance broken by only two plantations on the right descending bank of Lafourche. And the Southern Methodist Church is the only Protestant Church now operating in the immediate locality."

At the November 1915 Louisiana conference, Rev. C.V. Breithaupt received his last appointment to the Houma Mission. Rev. A.D. Martin was appointed to the Lafourche mission for the third year. Rev. C. Fulton Starnes was appointed to assist Rev. Martin as a local preacher. He came to south Louisiana from North Carolina. The journal stated that there was only one church in the charge. One other church (at Bayou Blue) had been destroyed that year.

In one of his last letters before he left Houma, Rev. Breithaupt mentions that the revivals over the past seven years (assisted by the likes of Rev. Vaughan, A.W. Turner, Walter Harbin, Martin Hebert, and J.G. Snelling) have touched more hearts than any he has ever seen. People who would have never darkened the doors of a church were now attending services.

So why would Rev. Breithaupt, so successful in the French Mission, leave Houma in 1916 before the appointment year was up? It seems as though his mother-in-law in Alexandria had developed a brain tumor. His father-in-law asked Margaretta to return home. That is why Rev. Breithaupt asked to leave Houma and be placed in Alexandria.

A meeting of the Sunday School Board on Tuesday, April 4, 1916 was held to replace Rev. Coleman, who had been appointed to pastor a church in Alexandria. Bishop Atkins was asked to appoint Rev. C.V. Breithaupt to immediately fill the position of Sunday School Field Secretary. Rev. Breithaupt accepted the position and moved to Alexandria.

Deaconess Kate Walker, who had replaced Miss Iles in 1915, was still serving as a pastor's assistant when Rev. Breithaupt left. Rev. Martin Hebert was appointed to fill in the remainder of Rev. Breithaupt's term. Since he lived so far away, Miss Walker handled things at the Houma church when Rev. Hebert couldn't make it to town. In the Woman's Missionary Council's 1917 report, Miss Walker noted that a reconstruction of the French work in the area was necessary. The funds for the French work in Houma for 1916 came from the Woman's Missionary Council ($600) and the Louisiana Conference ($320). Miss Walker noted that Rev. Breithaupt would be missed, for they had really depended on his leadership. There were a few volunteers from the Missionary Society, but they never stayed very long.

In a letter written in 1917, Miss Walker lamented over the work needed to be done. She noted that the Catholics had been taught from infancy to avoid other Churches as they would sin. The people would not come to the Methodists ... so "we must go to them." Many homes opened themselves up to a visit from the deaconess, but would turn away a minister.

Mrs. Walker herself left the area in 1917, due to ill health, and was replaced by Miss Hooper and Mrs. White.

In May, 1916, Rev. A.D. Martin, writing from Raceland, tells the Advocate that he now had six preaching places. He was joined recently by Rev. E.V. Duplantis, a colporter. Another preacher had visited with him a couple of weeks before. In both cases, they tried to conduct services in English and were met with contempt. He emphasized the need for pastors who spoke their (French) language. He had ten accessions of former Catholics this year. He noted the need for these people to find the way of salvation. The first step was to get French Bibles in their hands, followed by someone to help them understand it.

Later that summer, Rev. Martin wrote again to inform the Advocate that Rev. Martin Hebert had held a revival at Raceland Prairie. There were seven accessions. Rev. Hebert was a great asset, since he could preach in both French and English. It was said that he preached "great sermons, accompanied with the power of the Holy Spirit."

Rev. G.A. Morgan: 1916-1917

At the November 1916, Louisiana Conference, Rev. G.A. Morgan was appointed to Houma. The Lafourche Mission was left to be supplied by A.D. Martin.

> Rev. Morgan was born in Indian Bayou on August 28, 1888. He married Edith Hoffpauir in 1902 and had two sons. He joined the Louisiana Conference in 1903. He spent the greatest amount of time serving the Jonesboro charge. He only spent one year in Houma. This was possible due to his health; he had an asthmatic condition. But he never lost his smile or his gentle, unselfish nature. It was said that people saw the "image of Christ" reflected in his life. He had a quiet, but forceful personality. His sermons were strong and scholarly. He passed away on June 21, 1959.

In May, 1917, Rev. Morgan wrote to the Advocate to update everyone on the Houma mission. An Easter revival, lasting two weeks, had just been completed. Rev. H. Wade Cudd of Baton Rouge preached two sermons a day for ten days. Rev. Hebert also came to preach three sermons. Rev. Morgan himself preached five times. Though there was a small number of accessions and conversions, the spiritual life of the church was renewed. Rev. Morgan noted the similarity of this field to a foreign mission field. The people spoke a different language, had many superstitions, lacked education, and were pressured by another religion (Catholicism). Still, the Methodist church was making progress.

There were now seventy members within reach of the church. The Sunday School, under the leadership of Dr. J.W. Warren, was growing. The Wesley Bible Class had twenty members and was also growing. Houma had an active Women's Missionary Society with sixteen members. The women paid their tithes and were quite willing to lead in public prayer. A Senior Epworth League in May.

The Houma charge had recently held its first quarterly meeting under presiding elder, Rev. H.W. May. It was noted that the greatest need for the Houma congregation was a good church building. They had been using the old Masson home as a church, but they were trying to raise funds for a new building.

The year 1917 brought an important person back to Terrebonne Parish. If we may, let's look at the history of Ella Hooper and the MacDonell School.

WESLEY HOUSE and MacDONELL FRENCH MISSION SCHOOL

Before we look at the MacDonell School, let's take a minute to look at the role of Woman's Societies and their influence on the Terrebonne area ... since they were instrumental in the development of MacDonell. The Woman's Home Mission Society was formed in 1879. It sought to reach the home mission fields that may have been overlooked in lieu of the foreign field. It helped to open several training schools for women. The official position of deaconess was established.

The major goal of the Society, as stated in the 1890's, was to educate the poor and unchurched. In 1910, the Woman's Board of Home Missions and the Woman's Board of Foreign Missions joined to form the Woman's Missionary Council.

It was the Woman's Board of Home Missions that sent the first two deaconesses, Miss Iles and Miss Walker, to Houma. Their concern for the home mission field in Louisiana also led them to send Miss Ella Hooper and Mrs. Laura White to Houma. Under their leadership and support, the MacDonell French Mission School was formed.

Miss Ella Keener Hooper was born on January 1, 1886 in Livonia, Louisiana. Due to the lack of a school or church and the frequent flooding, her family moved to Rosedale, Louisiana in 1893. Her grandfather was Rev. Samuel Hawes, who had pastored the Thibodaux church in the 1850's and had preached in Terrebonne Parish on occasion.

Since Rosedale only had a one-room school, most of Miss Hooper's elementary education was by home study. At the age of sixteen, she enrolled at the Louisiana State Normal School. When she graduated in 1905, she received her teaching certificate and taught at the local school for two years. But Miss Hooper's heart was set on mission work. She entered the Scarritt College and Training School in Kansas City, Missouri in 1908. Her friend and relative, Mrs. Christian Keener, aided her financially and encouraged her in her quest. After only one year at Scarritt, Miss Hooper had to drop out due to ill health.

She had always dreamed of traveling to Africa or some other foreign land to work as a missionary, but she was rejected because of her poor eyesight and fragile nature. So, she applied for a job with the Louisiana state school superintendent. She told him, "I want to go to the place where the people are the poorest and most illiterate, where I can teach them from the books and where I can talk to them about their souls." He sent her to a school among the French people of Bayou Blue.

Miss Hooper stayed with a local family when she first arrived in Houma. When the lady of the house met Miss Hooper, the first thing she asked was "What church do you belong to?" Miss Hooper answered, "I am a Southern Methodist." The French woman said, "Thank God for that; I was afraid you would be a Protestant." The two women grew to be great friends, for she was to become Miss Hooper's interpreter on her trips down the bayou. The interpreter was a matronly woman who had "a smile that angels must wear."

She became very interested in the French and Indian people of south Louisiana. She realized that the people were in need of a Christian industrial school. With the permission of the parents, she began reading stories from the Bible on Sundays and established the first Sunday Bible school groups in the area.

After teaching in Terrebonne Parish for three years, she left the area and returned to her hometown of Rosedale for several years to regain her health. She then went to study at the University of Chicago. Upon completion of courses at the university, she again applied to Mrs. R.W. MacDonell of the Mission Board for a position where she could teach poor children. She was willing to work for no pay. Mrs. MacDonell sent her to Georgia, where Miss Hooper worked at Vashti School for Girls for a while. She was then transferred to the Martha Berry School in the mountains near Rome, Georgia, for a year. Miss Hooper was such a fine teacher that they insisted on paying her a salary. It is at this mountain school that she met and befriended Laura White, who was working as a secretary at the school.

It was 1917; Ella Hooper had not seen Terrebonne for five years, but she had not forgotten the French and Indian children of south Louisiana. She shared her dream, of returning to Louisiana and starting a mission school of her own, with Mrs. White. Mrs. White said, "Wherever you go, I want to go with you."

"Are you in earnest about that?" Miss Hooper asked.

"I am" said Mrs. White.

"Then come to my room and we will talk to God about it."

They went to her room, got down on their knees, and prayed that God would help them fulfill their dream. After they finished praying, Miss Hooper wrote a letter to Mrs. MacDonell asking to be assigned to south Louisiana.

Their prayers were answered two days later. Miss Walker, the deaconess assigned to Houma, had just resigned due to ill health. They were invited to take her place. They were instructed to "look over the entire field and plan the work most needed." Since in appeared that a school was not necessary, they modified their original dream ... for now.

Tochie MacDonell was the general secretary of the Woman's Council at this time. Mrs. MacDonell, a Georgian born into a prominent family, was married to a Methodist minister. She had accompanied him as a missionary to Mexico years earlier. She felt a special burden to address the home mission field. Mrs. MacDonell was connected with the Mission Board for over twenty-five years. She defined the scope and aim of the Woman's Home Mission Society as "serving humanity, building character, and saving souls." Mrs. MacDonell believed that the Woman's Home Mission Society was an "expression of the Church of that faith in religion as a social force which makes possible the accomplishment of the ideal community where men are truly neighbors and love each other as themselves."

The two women arrived in Houma in September of 1917. They found four churches in the area. Miss Hooper and Mrs. White decided on Houma as the center of operations for the French work because of its central location. In October, they rented a small house on High St. across from the Methodist parsonage. The first two girls were Lucide and Maggie Martin, daughters of Rev. A.D. Martin. They were soon joined by Anaize Martin and Elizabeth Thompson. One of these girls, Mrs. Maggie Martin Bergeron, later lived and taught at the school for a number of years. After only a couple of months at their new home, they had received over 100 guests.

Miss Hooper was tall and frail. She was highly educated and "full of zeal ... with bright, burning eyes." She was a strict lady with a commanding presence who always wore a hat and eyeglasses. Mrs. White, a widow, was quite different. She was a patient woman with a larger frame. She loved to teach the Bible ... whether it be to a group of children in a house in Lockport or to a group of French women at the Houma church on Sunday afternoons. Their salary was $45 a month each, most of which they put back into their ministry.

They set about their work of conducting Sunday school classes, clubs, missionary societies, and other inspirational meetings among the women and children. Since the meeting places were scattered about Terrebonne and Lafourche Parishes, the women arranged to obtain a Ford automobile before the end of the year. As the 1918 Council Journal stated, "a great door is open in this section of the country."

With the addition of a car, the rural ministry of Wesley House began. It usually left the school on Sunday mornings loaded with packages of clothing from Missionary Societies from Louisiana and other states. The clothes were sold very cheaply or given away. She also brought books, magazines, pictures for children, candy, emergency supplies, and the class materials for lessons. Often guests (especially an interpreter) would accompany the ladies. If not, someone was usually picked up on the way and given a ride. The first stop would be at Bayou Blue. After morning services, an hour of fellowship, and lunch, they would head down the bayou fifteen miles to the next stop. After the second meeting, they would head back to Houma in time for the Epworth League meeting and the evening worship service.

On Mondays, Mrs. White would teach Bible classes. On Thursdays and Fridays, the women would travel to missionary auxiliary meetings, Americanization classes, and friendly visits around the area.

In the summers, they would stay out in the field for two weeks at a time. They would hold Bible meetings, cottage prayer meetings, social meetings, and missionary meetings. They would also engage itinerating evangelistic tours lasting three days.

Miss Hooper would hold Bible lessons and teach the children to read and write. For those that couldn't read, she held up pictures. She tried to teach them new hymns in English. After a while, they could sing them, but they didn't really know what they were singing until they learned English. If she was visiting people who only spoke French, she might bring an interpreter with her. She organized Sunday Schools up and down the bayous, as places such as Cedar Grove, Dulac, Point au Chien, and Lockport. She also conducted Woman's Society of Christian Service classes at Dulac, Point aux Chien, Bayou Blue, Labadieville, Raceland, and Lockport ... where she taught Bible study, dietary, and nursing skills.

August was the month for "institutes." Boys could attend an institute in the summer where they would learn about agricultural and industrial matters. They often took field trips to area businesses. The purpose of the institute was to teach the boys the fundamentals of physical, intellectual, spiritual, and social development. Girls also had institutes, often called House Parties. Six to ten girls were invited to the house to learn sewing, cooking, and other homemaking skills. The week also included singing lessons and Bible study. The following article was written by a MacDonell visitor, Miss Caroline Hess, in August of 1922.

> Did you ever attend a House Party? A real house party, for a whole week when everything was done for the pleasure of you and your friends? If you have, you may be able to appreciate how happy the thirty-two little girls who attended the Wesley House Party at Houma, La., were during the week of June 25-July 1.
>
> Early in the spring Miss Hooper invited me to be present. I went with her on June 25 to Sunday school at Point aux Chene. This in itself was an intereesting experience, but not to be compared with the interest which began there and which continued through the week.
>
> After Sunday school the girls began to climb into the Missionary Ford." Seldom has a Ford been privileged to carry a happier party --- four grown-ups, eight little girls, and seven suitcases. Need I say that many people turned to watch as we passed by? The Ford seemed to be as happy as any member of the party, however, and, singing its little song, brought us to the Wesley House, with its great yard, shaded by beautiful oaks hung with moss. In the back yard the big tent was all ready for us with its beds covered with white bars.
>
> Although the party was to begin on Monday night, we had twenty girls Sunday night. Not one minute of the time were they willing to miss. Monday we had only a few classes, giving the children time to get acquainted and to play. On Tuesday morning work began in earnest. At 6 a.m. the rising bell started the day. Breakfast was at 7, and at 8 we had our morning prayer service. At 8:30 the girls assembled on the front porch for a half hour of Bible Stories. The themes for

> the four days were "God's Good Gifts," "God's Protecting Care," "God's Helpers," and "Heroes." From nine to ten pictures illustrating that morning's theme were chosen and pasted on a double fold of paper. These folds were made into a scrap book on the last day.
>
> From 10 to 10:15 was lunch hour and the ice cream, cake, or candy was enjoyed by all. At 10:15 we had our music lesson. At 11 we studied or practiced for the entertainment which was given in the church on Friday night. From 1:30 to 3 was spent in sewing class and after that came an hour of directed play. At 4 each girl was sent to her cot for 15 minutes of quiet and then all were allowed to dress for the evening. At 8 we sang songs, closing with our good-night prayer at 8:30.
>
> So the days of the House Party were spent. But what would a House Party be without "three meals a day." Mrs. White, assisted by Millie, saw that this part of the day's program was successfully carried out. Never once did the girls hesitate to "Take a Stand," and great was their delight when Millie led "When the Saints go Marching Home" and other songs sung only as a fine old negro mammy can sing them.
>
> Aside from the regular work, every girl knew the Twenty-third Psalm before the week was over. About one-third of them had learned the 100th Psalm. Nine knew the first twelve verses of John 14. They also learned five memory texts, between eight and twelve songs and memorized two little missionary plays for their entertainment. Each girl made a handkerchief in sewing class and some did other sewing.
>
> These girls, many of them, have had none or very little schooling. Many of them never hear a word of English in their homes. To watch them as they associated with the other children, as they comprehended and then accomplished the task given them, made you think of the opening of a beautiful flower when the warm morning ray of the sun touched it and brought it into its beauty.
>
> I wish that the wonderful work which Miss Hooper and her helpers are doing might be seen by many and known by all of our people. Surely the poet meant such work as here when he said, "Who gives himself with his alms feeds three: himself, his hungering neighbor, and me."

The student preachers at MacDonell in those first years included E.V. Duplantis, James A. Knight, and Edgar Dufrene.

By the end of 1918, the ladies were still hard at work. Besides the Sunday school classes, they were holding Bible classes, a family class, a four day institute, and a teacher training class for Bible memory. At the beginning of the year, very few people owned Bibles. Over the past twelve months, over two dozen Bibles had been distributed by the ladies. Of course, less than five percent of the adults in the rural areas can read or write (in French or in English).

They found the public school doing an adequate job, as they had been told. But, they were very overcrowded; and they didn't touch the religious needs of the people.

On March 21, 1918, a meeting was held at the "Methodist Mission Hall," as the newspaper called it, to discuss the possibility of opening a Christian Industrial School for Girls in Houma. Representatives of the three Protestant religions, including the pastors, were at the meeting. All were in agreement that such a school would be a good idea.

Miss Hooper and Mrs. White had long admired the Gagne house on East Main Street. It was built (probably by the Dunn family) and inherited by Sarah Dunn Gagne. They thought it would be an ideal place to have a school. Miss Hooper once remarked to Mrs. White, "That is an ideal place for our school. Let us ask God to help us get it." When they found out one day in 1919 that it was for sale, they wrote to Mrs. MacDonell to see if the Board could buy it. The money wasn't readily available, and someone else bought it. But, after only four days, the new owner (Mr. Adam Boquet) and his family packed up their belongings and headed back to his farm. It is said that they were haunted by the ghost of Mrs. Sarah Gagne. The property was for sale again. When Mr. Desire Bergeron stayed in the house later, he found out that the strange noises were caused by squirrels dropping pecans down the gutters. It is said that God works in mysterious ways ... I guess he sometimes even uses squirrels.

A $10,000 gift from Centenary was given to the French work. Mrs. J.H. McCoy, Administrative Secretary of the Eastern Division of the Women's Missionary Council, purchased the land (eighteen acres) with one house (the Gagne home) on the property. It is said that when Mrs. Sarah Gagne, lived in the home years before, she hoped that her home would go to the church to be used for the education of poor children. Her great-grandson noted that she had been a devout Methodist. She left many books on religion among her effects. An oak tree on the property was named after her by Miss Hooper.

Years later, Mrs. Gagne's dream finally came true. The home was now called Wesley House. Wesley Houses were homes sponsored by the Methodist Church that took in young girls and helped to raise them in a Christian manner.

Rev. A.D. Martin moved the furniture from the rented house on High St. to the new location with a wagon and two mules. There were five girls living at the home at this time. George LaGrange, his wife, and child also lived at the home while he prepared for work in the church.

Miss Hooper and Mrs. White wrote to the New Orleans Christian Advocate to inform everyone that the Wesley House in Houma was now open and would welcome guests. Miss Hooper's life-long dream of reaching the French and Indians was now within reach.

With the Wesley House set up in Houma, the women were positioned to reach all of Terrebonne and Lafourche Parishes. The mission field was divided into two areas. One area, with Bourg at the center, was covered by Miss Hooper. The other area, with

Raceland and Lockport as the center, was covered by Mrs. White. Within a year, Sunday schools, and Epworth League, and a Woman's Missionary Society had been organized in these locations. Miss Hooper wrote to the New Orleans Christian Advocate periodically over the years. Realizing that the MacDonell School relied on the support of the Conference, she made sure that everyone knew of their activities. She also encouraged guests to come for a visit, to see firsthand the good work being done.

The year 1919 was the year that Miss Hooper finally became a deaconess. Over the years, she had kept up her education during her vacation periods ... attending courses at Emory University, Scarritt in Nashville, Peabody, and Vandebilt. But, she could still not pass the physical requirements for deaconess. The Council decided in 1919 to appoint her a deaconess without the formality of passing the physical requirements.

In February of 1921, Miss Hooper again wrote to the Advocate. She noted that Miss Griffin, the new homemaker, had just arrived. The annual report statistics were as follows: 2737 visits made, 2387 visits received, 45 boys and girls at the summer institutes, 781 garments distributed, 570 Christmas gifts distributed, 300 Christmas cards and messages delivered, 6463 miles travelled in mission work, 778 rides given in the Missionary Ford, and 55 boxes received. The budget for 1921, which was supplied by the Woman's Missionary Council, was $3,900.

In October of 1921, she wrote of the arrival of Miss Moselle Eubanks to the staff. She began work right away with the junior Sunday School class, the Junior Missionary Society, and the Christian Endeavor Society. The summer helpers for 1921 were Bertha Griffin (Crowley), Elvira and Ora Hooper (Rosedale), Mrs. George Elms (Houma), Mrs. J.W. Warren (Houma), Mr. James Grambling (Shreveport), Rev. E.V. Duplantis (Ville Platte), and Mr. James Knight (Bourg). Ora, Ella's sister, later went to school in Alabama and became a missionary herself. Mrs. J.H. McCoy had visited them and travelled around to various country points. The ladies worked hard at filling the Cradle Rolls. They reached fifty homes by the end of the year. Their slogan was, "A Family Altar in Every Cradle Roll Home." The Cradle Roll was kind of a preparatory Sunday school for infants and toddlers.

The MacDonell Wesley Community House was dedicated in the fall of 1921. Dignitaries from around the state, including Bishop W.F. McMurry were in attendance. After a program at the Wesley House, the crowd walked to the Mission Hall (as the church was called) in downtown Houma to hear the Bishop preach. After the service, the bishop travelled to Raceland to dedicate their church.

A copy of the first quarterly record for the Wesley House in 1922 mentions several prominent guests who have visited. Miss Hooper always encouraged visitors to the school. The record points out that Leola Marcelle has just joined the school, bringing the total number to 12. The yearly tuition cost per child was $150. When they couldn't afford it, scholarships were provided by groups and individuals from around the state. For example, Odette Martin had a scholarship from Noel Memorial in Shreveport and Leola

Marcelle had a partial scholarship from a Mrs. R.F. Harrell of Tallulah. A new Missionary Society of 13 boys and 3 girls had been formed under the leadership of Miss Eubanks.

Miss Effie K. Fauver arrived in the summer of 1922. She was in charge of the supervising work in the home and meals. She taught the first, second, and third grades and a part of the fourth in the mornings. In the afternoon, she taught industrial classes such as sewing and laundry. The work did not stop even on Sundays. She had a teacher training class at Sunday school. She was in charge of the boys' quiet time from two to four o'clock. On Sunday evenings there were two League meetings and the worship service.

Sunday schools and missionary societies were now being held in six locations. The ladies were helping pastors and evangelists with revivals under a gospel tent.

Each year the Methodist women would hold a Week of Prayer to raise money for missionary purposes. In 1922, Miss Hooper made a request for more money to expand the school. Since there was money left from the previous year, the money ($24,000) was allocated to construct new buildings at Wesley House. The contract to build the school was awarded to the Montague Construction Company, of Abbeville. Two buildings were completed by 1923: the dormitory and school building for boys and girls, and the McCoy Building which contained the kitchen and dining room. The furniture and equipment (and their maintenance) was paid for by the Women's Missionary Society of the Louisiana Conference. A garage, dairy barn, and poultry house were built over the next few years. With construction of the new buildings, Wesley House was now a school.

It was named the MacDonell French Mission School, after former secretary Tochie MacDonell. The boys' activities would include painting, carpentry, gardening, dairying, and raising poultry. The girls' activities would include sewing, cooking, washing, ironing, typing, music lessons, and general homemaking. Students usually joined the Methodist Church shortly after joining the school. The ladies would march the MacDonell students down Main Street to the Methodist church on Sundays. Later a chapel was built on the campus.

By 1923, the enrollment at the school increased to 24. Daily Vacation Bible School began in the early 1920's. The average attendance was over one hundred. It drew from fifteen different communities in the area. Miss Louise Searcy joined the staff this year. She taught fifth grade in the mornings and sewing in the afternoon. On Sundays, she taught a junior class in Sunday school.

Mrs. White was still keeping busy. She held week-day Bible classes for women, worked in the office, taught sight singing, handled the cradle roll department, organized Vacation Bible Schools, and travelled around the state to present their work to missionary societies. Mrs. White's favorite task, holding week-day Bible classes in private homes, was going well. There were 56 babies on the Cradle Roll. She also spent a lot of time in the field.

There was a change in staff for 1924. Mr. H.M. Scott and Miss Lois Hammett came as teachers. Miss Hammett had recently graduated from the Methodist Orphanage in Ruston. Miss Ione Gandy became the new housekeeper. The enrollment at the school for 1924-1925 was 36, with ages ranging from eight to twenty years old. The budget was now at almost $9,000. The first Standard Training School was held in August at the school.

Standard Training Schools were held for the entire district. Attendance was requested of ministers, church officers, Sunday school teachers, Epworth Leaguers, members of Missionary Societies, and anyone interested in the educational program of the church. The meeting was six days long.

In a 1925 bulletin on the MacDonell School, Miss Ella Hooper describes the typical rural Terrebonne Parish home as follows. "The houses are mostly unpainted, unattractive, two-room shacks, with heavy cypress doors and windows, which are kept wide open in winter to let in a little warmth from the sunlight, and tightly closed in summer to keep out the mosquitoes. There is always a small gallery across the front of the house where the family washing is done, and as many other home activities as the space allows. The front room is usually large and contains two to four beds, according to the size of the family, an old-fashioned bureau, an armoire, a sewing machine, and two or more chairs, which are often home-made. A few saint pictures and images ornament the walls and perhaps some enlarged family portraits. The room in the rear is the kitchen, dining room, and living room. At the back of the room is a great open fireplace with a dirt chimney. Near by is the cook stove with the coffeepot already on it, a home-made table covered with brown oilcloth, a safe and some wooden benches. On the back porch, if there is one, and near the cistern, is a shelf on which stands a small granite wash pan, some soap and a coarse towel, which constitute the family bathing facilities. The small front yard is a mass of bloom and the back yard a mud hole and pig wallow."

So, what kind of children went to the MacDonell School? Generally they were children that Miss Hooper would meet on her trips up and down the bayous. Most came from Terrebonne and Lafourche Parishes, though quite a few came from other areas of the state. She found young people who desired to learn or were in need of the school's assistance. Two examples are the stories of Tom and Velia.

Tom and his family lived on a houseboat down the bayou. One day, Tom accidentally fell into the bayou. His mother jumped in and rescued him, but she drowned in the process. His father, a trapper, was left alone with Tom and his little sister. With no mother to care for him, Tom soon became so covered with a skin disease that his skin looked like brown leather. Tom's father heard about the school Miss Hooper was operating and took the boy to Houma. Within a few weeks at the school, Tom had regained a healthful appearance. He soon became one of Miss Hooper's favorites at the school. After graduation, he entered the military. Tom is still a member of the Methodist Church today.

Velia also lived down the bayou at Point au Chien. She was familiar with Miss Hooper and looked forward to her visits. Her older sister was invited by Miss Hooper to attend MacDonell. Velia wanted to go too, but her mother said that she was needed at home. Nevertheless, Velia was determined to go. One day, when Miss Hooper came by, Velia got on board the Missionary Ford and went to MacDonell. Though her mother didn't want her to go, she let her stay at MacDonell. Velia, the little girl who "ran away" to go to school, eventually graduated from high school and left MacDonell when she got married. She, too, is still a member of the Methodist Church today.

Miss Lucy Kagey was added to the staff in 1925. She taught the fourth and fifth grades in the morning and boys industrial classes in the evening. As Miss Kagey said, it was necessary to teach them how to make better homes, but "each contact is an opportunity to teach Jesus Christ."

Miss Lillie Schack joined the staff in 1926. She taught the first, second, and third grades in the morning and boys' industrial classes in the afternoon.

Mrs. Downs, the Administrative Secretary at that time, secured a $9,000 gift from Centenary in 1927. It was used for improvements and to purchase two more acres of land. An adjacent home was bought to use for the younger girls. They named it Hope Cottage, because they had long hoped they could buy it. It later burned down when a teacher left a paint can too close to a heater.

By 1929, the school's enrollment was up to 63. Miss Hooper mentioned in the Council report that "gris-gris" was causing some students to drop out. Gris-gris was the Cajun equivalent of voodoo or black magic. One could go on and on with the stories of superstition. The Acadians had mixed the superstitions with the Catholic faith. The Methodists debunked all such superstitions, making their acceptance difficult for some natives who were familiar with the old ways.

The rural work was now reaching out to four parishes. The students were now helping out with Junior Missionary Societies. Deaconesses Mattie Lou Neal and Muriel Bell joined the staff this year. Miss Bell was an R.N. who came to care for the medical needs of the school.

Deaconess Lillie J. Hendricks joined the staff in 1930. Most of her time was spent at the Wesley House. It served as the "home" building for the students during their social hours. Miss Hendricks was the supervisor of classroom instruction.

Miss Ruth Wyche and deaconess Myrta Davis joined the staff in 1931. Miss Wyche served as the superintendent of the school during the absence of Miss Hooper, who had gone down to Dulac to work with the Indians. The enrollment stood at 62. The school work covered second through ninth grade. Students above the ninth grade level went to Terrebonne High School. The teachers were still faced with the problem that the new students could only speak French. Gradually, they would pick up enough French to get them by until the students learned English. Vacation Bible Schools were expanding, now being held in five locations around the area.

Miss Hooper returned as superintendent in 1932. Other teachers on staff included deaconesses Elizabeth Covington, Shiela Nuttall, Lillie J. Hendricks, Emma Vogel, and Ollie Willings. Miss Covington, a music teacher, found that the children are by nature musical. Miss Vogel worked as a nurse. Miss Nuttall had been raised in Louisiana. She noted that she had never realized that such a need existed in our state. Miss Willings stated that before she came, she wondered where her missionary work would come in. After a short while in the parish, she stated that "there cannot be a greater field than the one found here. Even though the teachers had a full week at the school, they were still travelling to the rural areas on the weekends and in the summer.

In 1932, MacDonell was again the recipient of the Week of Prayer money. Keener Hall, a girls' dormitory, was added to the MacDonell School with the funds. It served as a girls dormitory and infirmary.

Deaconess Bessie Williams was added to the staff in 1933. She was the librarian and taught high school English.

The enrollment of the school was up to 90 by 1935. Deaconess Pearlye Maye Kelley joined the staff that year. After a two year absence, deaconess Elizabeth Covington returned to the staff.

By 1936, there were twelve adult workers at MacDonell. The newest addition was Miss Susie Teel. She taught the fourth grade, which included students aged nine to fifteen. Upon her arrival in September, she stated "I was impressed with the beauty of the place. The campus is an enchantment. I found here a veritable beehive of devoted, loyal men and women, busily engaged in their several tasks of directing the studies and other activities of the various groups. The work of the campus and the local church forms the center of activities which extend for miles into adjacent needy communities. I love and enjoy the work and count it a high privilege to share in this most worthwhile field of service."

By 1938, the MacDonell School curriculum had expanded to include all grades from elementary to the high school level. The enrollment was larger than ever, and there was a long waiting list. New personnel added this year included deaconess Anna Fay Fowler, Mabel K. Harrell, Annie Law, and David Paul Smith. There were directed playground activities twice a week. A social event or outing was held at the school each Friday evening. Each day started with services in the chapel. The older students were actively helping out with the missionary work in rural areas. Plans were being made to build the Houma Heights Church on property at the back of the MacDonell School. This meant that the students would not have to walk all the way to the church in Houma. A pastor, Oakley Lee, had already been assigned and was holding services in the school's chapel.

Downs' Hall, a kitchen and dining hall, was added to the MacDonell Home in 1940. It was named after Mrs. J.W. Downs. Mrs. Downs was the administrative secretary for the Woman's Missionary Council at that time.

From 1949 to 1953, the function of MacDonell changed from that of a boarding school to a school for Indians. MacDonell ceased operations as a school in 1953 and became a home for dependent children. The children who stayed there attended the public schools.

Miss Ella Hooper left the MacDonell School in 1949 to help her sister, Wilhemina, at the Indian school in Dulac. The Woman's Division, which was taking over responsibility of the Dulac Mission, began work on a school building in 1950. Miss Ella Hooper moved into the unfinished building to help to get the building and grounds in shape.

In August 1951, Miss Ella Hooper retired at the age of sixty-five and moved back to Rosedale. Mrs. Laura White, the co-founder of MacDonell School, had left a few years earlier; because of poor health, she went to a nursing home in New Orleans.

Ada W. Dail succeeded Miss Hooper as the director of MacDonell in August of 1951. Other directors through the years include Julia Ried (1950), Nettie Thornton (1950-1954), Velma Lee Hair (1954), Anne Coucoules (1954-1957), Maude Bristol (1957-1958), Harry Ezell (1958-1960), and John Howe (1960-1969). G.J. Bridges has been the director since 1969.

The Ella K. Hooper Cottage was dedicated at the MacDonell Methodist Center. Miss Hooper was present for the ceremonies. Shortly after, Miss Ella K. Hooper passed away on June 28, 1967 in her home in Rosedale at age eighty-five.

Presently, MacDonell is a therapeutic residential facility for school age children. It is still owned by the Women's Division of the Board of Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church. It is now known as MacDonell United Methodist Children's Services.

Rev. Franklin J. McCoy: 1917-1927

Franklin J. McCoy was assigned to replace Rev. Morgan at the Houma charge, which now had 80 members. He would spend the next ten years here in Houma. There was one church (Bayou Blue) in the charge and one parsonage (in Houma). The Lafourche Mission had 48 members, while the rest of the French Mission had 225 members.

Rev. Franklin Jay McCoy was born on August 28, 1882 in Winchester, Kansas. His family was one of the five families in the "Wagon Train Party" that moved to southwest Louisiana in 1890. Brother Mac, as he was called, was a hard worker and enjoyed working with his hands. He used his skills in carpentry, plumbing, and farming to help build our church, as well as to help raise extra money to live on. One of his jobs to help put food on the table was working on the installation of the gas pipeline in Houma for his friend, J.H. Thatcher.

He was a man of the people; the kind of person that you couldn't help but like. He was a large man with a deep voice. He enjoyed singing. While in college at Centenary, he was on the football team. His speaking style was not the greatest, but the sincerity of his sermons captivated his congregations. His sermons were practical and conversational. Rev. McCoy was also very supportive of the native/local pastors. He would also walk around town to visit his congregation on Mondays.

Rev. McCoy's wife, Lucy, was loved by everyone. She was as small as her husband was big. A soft-spoken woman, she knew how to look past the trivial things that annoy most people and concentrate on the important things in life. Lucy taught Sunday School, sang in the choir, and was a member of the Missionary Society. She always referred to her husband as "Dearie." Although she was ill herself, she managed to survive to take care of him. She died two months after he did.

Rev. McCoy served around the state. His longest stay by far was in Houma, where he spent ten years. A heart attack during his appointment at LeCompte in the mid-1940's forced him to retire from the pulpit. After spending time recovering in Lafayette and Dry Creek, the McCoy's moved near Crowley. Rev. McCoy took up gardening and raising chickens. He also served as the visiting minister at the nearby Methodist Church. Rev. McCoy passed away in February of 1966. As Dr. B. Joseph Martin said in a memorial, Brother Mac lived his life with an exclamation point!

In April, 1917, Rev. A.D. Martin, writing from Raceland, tells the Advocate that he now had eleven preaching places, not including Houma. He notes that Rev. Morgan is doing an excellent job in Houma. He goes on to mention the "superstitions" that the Catholic people had ... including holy water, holy candles, holy pieces of grass (to save them from fire, thunder, or drowning). Some of the men have raised families for forty years without getting married and didn't know it was wrong until they heard a French Methodist preacher.

The Methodist church in Gibson was still being used by the Episcopalians. A Houma Times article dated December 15, 1917 states that Rev. Davis Sessums, the Episcopal bishop of Louisiana, would preach at "St. Anna's Mission" in Gibson the next day.

At the 1919 Louisiana Conference, Martin Hebert was the presiding elder of the Houma District. For a short time, the circuits around the French Mission were known as the Houma District. Rev. F.J. McCoy was appointed to Houma for the third year. Houma had 65 members. Rev. A.J. Martin was appointed to the Lockport charge for the second year. The Lockport church had 81 members and one church building. Local preachers serving the district out of Bourg were A.D. Martin and R.E. Martin. The Bayou Blue church had 90 members.

In an article to the New Orleans Christian Advocate on January 29, 1919, Rev. A.J. Martin wrote from the church at Lockport. He relayed the situation "down the bayou." Rev. Martin states that he is living in a rented house and is preaching out of the front room of that house. He notes that the people are hesitant to come to hear him for fear of excommunication from the Catholic church. After all, the Catholic church has been here "forever." The Methodists don't have a church, a cemetery, and haven't been here for long. A man recently died and Rev. Martin prayed over him. Because of this, the priest refused to officiate the funeral ... and grudgingly allowed him to be buried in the Catholic cemetery (only because it was the only one around). Rev. Martin says that we need to put down roots so that the people will have confidence in Methodism. The only church along the Bayou Lafourche is at Raceland, though he visits several preaching places where people allow him to use their homes.

In that same year, Rev. A.D. Martin wrote from the church at Bayou Blue. He was trying to get Methodists elsewhere to understand that the mission field in south Louisiana was as "backwards" as mission fields abroad. He writes about the practices of Catholics in the areas. When someone was sick, the priest would hang prayer beads around the bed. Sometimes someone would have to stay up all night to keep holy candles burning. A piece of grass in the shape of a cross was sprinkled with salt and burned to keep them from being hurt in storms. He states that many teenagers have never been inside a church. The young people can't read or write. They spend their Sundays fishing or hunting or fighting.

The Catholic Church continued to be a hindrance to the spread of Methodism. Rev. LaGrange told of how the Catholic priests held the Methodists up as an example of people who support their church because they like it. Then, when the people wanted to go to the Methodist church to see for themselves what they were missing, the priest would warn them. He'd say, "Didn't I tell you not to go to that church, for our church is the oldest and only church. I will not give you absolution, neither will I bury you when you die." That was what the people, whose families had been Catholic for hundreds of years, had to face if they thought about attending a Methodist service.

At the 1920 conference, the Houma District was now called the French Mission District once again. Rev. A.D. Martin was sent to Lydia. K.F. Martin was to serve the Bayou Circuit as a supply. Rev. A.J. Martin was sent to Port Barre and St. Martin. Rev. McCoy stayed in Houma, assisted by five local preachers: R.E. Martin, E.V. Duplantis, Jas. A. Knight, Edgar Dufrene, and Aristide Brulet. Houma had grown to 80 members and Bayou Blue had 105.

The Houma District held a rally for the youth on June 20, 1920, at the Houma Church. The State Superintendent of Young Peoples' work presided over the program. The youth organization at this time was known as the Epworth League. There was a senior division for the high school age and a junior division for junior high age. A traditional Epworth League meeting consisted of singing, a program, and devotions. They had a book to use for some of the songs and the devotions. The League would meet on Friday nights for social get-togethers. One of the presidents of the Epworth League around this time was B. Joseph "Buddy" Martin, son of Rev. A.D. Martin, who would later enter the ministry himself. Buddy Martin also worked as a janitor for the Red Brick church for a while for $10 a month.

CHAPTER 5

THE RED BRICK CHURCH

As of April 28, 1921, the Houma church had received sixteen members for the conference year. They received the second bids on the new church, the lowest being $17,500, in April. This is still higher than they could afford. Rev. McCoy wrote to the Advocate and stated that if the crops were good, they would be able to build that fall. The membership was at ninety-three. The Houma church, however, was still a mission church. Rev. McCoy said that if they had a good building, they could be a self-supporting church in ten years.

Rev. McCoy's car was destroyed in a fire that spring. The members of the congregation bought him a Ford. They also spent $100 on the parsonage. The women in the church would raise money to keep up the parsonage. For example, they saved Octagon soap coupons and bought a set of wicker furniture for the parsonage.

Eventually they took the plunge and started building. The contract was signed in October. Rev. McCoy had secured a donation of $5000 and a loan of $5000 from the General Board of Church Extension in 1919. The church members pledged $2000 over the next five years towards the building. The extra money that they needed was obtained when they sold the bulk of the property on High Street. They kept the parsonage at 814 High Street.

The building cost $15,400; the lighting fixtures and seats were extra. The entire church and lot eventually cost about $20,000. The "Little Green Church" was torn down to build the Red Brick Church. During the construction, the Methodists accepted Rev. Blackburn's invitation to worship with the Presbyterians. The cornerstone of the new church was laid sometime between Christmas and Epiphany. Inside the cornerstone was placed a Bible. It is not known if anything else was put inside.

The Red Brick Church was built in two levels. Downstairs were the rooms used for Sunday School and a small kitchen. To get to the sanctuary, you had to climb one of the two flights of stairs in front of the church. A small room was located at the top between the two sets of stairs. Two aisles divided the wooden pews into three sections. The pews weren't installed until 1924. The piano was located on the left side of the church. In the front of the church was a raised platform. There was a semicircular altar rail with cushions to kneel on. The altar was behind this. Behind the altar stood the pulpit. The choir was located behind the pulpit.

The opening service was held at 11 a.m. on the first Sunday in April. Dr. R.L. Russell, of the Mission Board, preached two sermons that day to a packed house. The offering for the day was $70. Six new members joined the church. There were 107 in Sunday School.

With all of this happening, they still were reaching out to the rest of the parish. Rev. McCoy travelled to Labadieville on Saturday and Point aux Chien on Sunday afternoon.

At the end of the year, Rev. Martin Hebert, who was the presiding elder, was appointed to serve Lockport, Raceland, and Bayou Blue. R.E. Martin and J.A. Knight were local preachers working out of Bourg. Edgar Dufrene was a local preacher based in Houma. He assisted Rev. McCoy with the congregation of 100 members. K.F. Martin was also serving as a local preacher, holding services along the bayou from Labadieville to Point aux Chene.

Through the years, pastors had been preaching at private homes at the community of Point aux Chene. A church was organized in 1918 with a membership of 21. A vacant home, arranged as a church, was used for two services a day. There was even a choir with 20 young people who sang in both French and English.

Ernest and Augustine Levron donated a piece of land on Bayou Point aux Chene to the Bayou Blue Methodist Church. The president at that time was Rev. Robert E. Martin of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. A small church was built in 1922. The Point aux Chene church was a small building with a steeple. There was a door in the front and a door by the pulpit. There was also a small piano in the corner. It was served by Miss Hooper and Rev. A.D. Martin in the early days. In the 1940's, it was torn down and the lumber used in the construction of a church at Bayou Blue.

The district lines were changed in 1922 and Houma was now in the New Orleans District. At the end of the year, G.A. LaGrange was appointed to serve the Bayou Blue charge. He had been staying at the MacDonell School. Within a few months, he had opened up two or three new preaching points. He was ready for a church at one point, where the membership of 75 was meeting in a house. Later on, Rev. LaGrange's second wife gave his church $800 and a communion set. In return, they named the church after LaGrange. The LaGrange church building later became the Bayou Blue church.

Before the Houma District was absorbed into the New Orleans District, a district meeting was held. Held in August of 1922, it was led by Rev. Martin Hebert, the presiding elder. The pastors in attendance were F.J. McCoy (Houma), George LaGrange (Bayou Blue), C.W. Lahey (Melville), E.V. Duplantis (Ville Platte), A.D. Martin (Lydia), J.A. Knight (Lockport), A.J. Martin (St. Martinville), Edgar Dufrene (assistant pastor at Lydia), A.M. Serex (assistant pastor at Houma), Gilbert Bergeron (assistant pastor at Bayou Blue), and local preachers P.E. Martin (Bourg) and K.F. Martin (Bourg). Four young men were licensed to preach at the meeting: Luke Henry Richard, Clerville J. Thibodeaux, Adrien M. Serex, and Leslie North. Also, James A. Knight and C.W. Lahey were recommended for admission to the Louisiana Conference.

Though the others were from Louisiana, Rev. A.M. Serex was from Switzerland. He was attending school at Emory University and was assigned to the Louisiana Conference. He was preparing for the ministry that he would practice when he returned to Belgium.

Dr. Guy Wilson, an evangelist from Boston, and several other visiting pastors preached sermons during the meeting. Even Rev. J.N. Blackburn of the Houma Presbyterian Church and Dr. G.L. Tucker of the Houma Episcopal Church were present. Much was said about the encouraging work being done by the Methodists in the area.

The new church building in Houma was now serving 126 members. By the end of 1922, the membership was over 150. The Houma church had one Sunday School with 117 members. It also had a Mothers' class, in which were enrolled the mothers of children on the Cradle Roll. The Mothers' class had a motto, "Family prayer in every home."

Evangelism meetings were still very popular. A two week meeting was held in January of 1923. Services were conducted by Rev. D.L. Patterson, a conference evangelist, and Rev. A.J. Notestine, the song leader. Rev. McCoy reported twenty-five new applications for membership by the middle of the second week.

A couple of months later, on Easter Sunday, eighteen new members were added. Since the Red Brick Church was built, seventy-five members joined the church rolls. It was written that the Houma church reported the largest per capita contribution of any church in the Conference. They even voluntarily raised Rev. McCoy's salary.

Rev. A.D. Martin was returned to the Lafourche area in 1923. He found that "a great work is to be done on Bayou Lafourche." Within the first year, he had opened up six new preaching places. He was still trying to reach the Catholic natives. He said it was hard work, but little by little he was having success. By 1924, plans for churches at Labadieville and Griffin were being made.

A 1926 newspaper article states that the ladies of the Methodist Church will give their Annual Thanksgiving Bazaar on November 24 at the church. Supper will be served, and there will be a sale of cakes, candies, pies, and other desserts.

Rev. Benjamin Harris Andrews: 1927-1932

Rev. Benjamin Harris Andrews was appointed to fill Rev. McCoy's shoes in Houma. Rev. McCoy moved to the other end of the state to West Monroe. Rev. Andrews was to serve here for five years. He had a wife and one child while here in Houma.

Rev. Andrews was born in Greenville, Illinois on June 10, 1887. He came to Louisiana as a student at Centenary College. At his first charge in Gonzales, he met and married Josephine Gonzales. She was an attractive woman and a devoted wife and helpmate during his ministry. They had two sons.

It was known that Rev. Andrews was very interested in bringing the Gospel to the French Mission field. He spent five years of his ministry doing so. He was a strong preacher and a good administrator. Though his sermons may not have been humorous, they went straight to the point.

Rev. Andrews always smoked a pipe. Perhaps this is what led to the heart attack that eventually did him in on December 23, 1948. Every time Rev. Andrews would go to the MacDonell School, he could be seen emptying his pipe when he got to the gate. Miss Hooper, you see, didn't allow smoking.

To organize the Methodists in the area, Rev. Andrews was asked to be the unofficial leader of the churches of the area. It is said that he wanted this position so that the reports would be impressive. He had thoughts of being a presiding elder one day. He told the French preachers to make all of their reports through him. Some of the local pastors, however, took umbrage with this.

Rev. Andrews was very effective in working with the young people. He could often be found taking a group of boys fishing. He also got them to help him work on the church, the parsonage, or the MacDonell School. It is remembered, however, that Rev. Andrews refused to allow the boys to read the comic papers. It was during Rev. Andrews tenure that the downstairs of the church was departmentalized. The parsonage was also enlarged.

A March 24, 1928 issue of the Houma Times describes a St. Patrick's Day Party by the Houma Epworth League held at MacDonell. They played games. Everything was decorated in green ... even the food. There was green punch, green iced cakes, and green candy. Boys wore green caps made by the girls. Girls wore green aprons made by the boys.

There was a bad hurricane in August of 1926 that flooded most of the parish. An extensive flood covered the parish soon after. It was the intensive aid that the Methodists gave the Dulac Indians, especially in times of trouble, that helped in their conversion to Methodism. Within twenty years, one out of every five Indians would be a Methodist. This incident would also lead to a school formed there in 1932.

A number of churches have been built in Terrebonne and Lafourche by the early 1930's. They were usually small in size, the only large church in the area being the one in Houma. The circuit was known as the Houma-French Mission Charge. The pastors working in these areas were supported by the Home Dept. of the Board of Missions. The salary was less than $100 a month. Converting the people in remote places had been successful because the Catholic influence was not as strong there. Later, when these rural folk moved closer to town, they helped to build up the church in Houma. Periodic camp meetings are held in the rural communities. The attendance at these tent meetings was usually good. Many of those that wouldn't enter a Protestant church had no problems with going to a meeting under a tent.

The presiding elder was at the Bayou Blue church for a Quarterly Conference (which was held in a home) at this time. He was asked if he'd rather the heat or the mosquitoes, because they hadn't any screens. He chose the heat and all of the windows and doors were shut. One article Rev. Andrews wrote in 1930 was entitled, "Listening to the Gospel Amid Mud and Mosquitoes."

Assisting Rev. Andrews as junior preachers were Rev. A.D. Martin and Rev. A.M. Martin. They would take care of the congregations "down the bayous."

> Rev. Alban Mitchell Martin was born on September 10, 1896 at Bayou Blue. As a youth he would play the piano in the Bayou Blue church. He was the son of Robert and Octavia Martin. He met his wife Eva while at Cincinnati Bible College. He returned to Louisiana and became a Methodist minister in 1924 and served the Acadiana area for forty-two years. He would often bring his folding organ with him when he held services in people's homes. He also liked to beautify churches and church grounds. He loved nature and gardening. Rev. Martin was compassionate and ever cheerful. He was not a great orator, but he loved to preach the Gospel. He was never without his Methodist Book of Worship and Hymnal. He passed away on June 9, 1967.

Rev. J.W. Booth: 1932-1936

In 1932, Rev. Andrews was replaced by Rev. J.W. Booth. Rev. Booth served the Houma area for four years. He was remembered as a slow speaker who would sometimes shed tears when delivering his sermons. He was short of stature, but tall on kindness. It was said that he was often heard telling tales about his wife that she might not have taken so lightly. It was noted that the Boy Scouts would meet at the church at this time. Rev. Booth used to visit the congregation regularly.

Rev. J.W. Booth was born on February 2, 1874 in Mississippi. He married Miss Mamie Lott on June 8, 1904. She was a quiet but supportive minister's wife who was fond of travel. Her tranquility contributed to the success of his ministry. They had three children. One of the sons, Luther, became a Methodist minister.

Rev. Booth led a deeply spiritual life. His sermons were not the most eloquent ever spoken; but they showed his sincerity and love of Christ. He spoke to your heart. It was said that after one of his services, you "felt" like you had been to church. He was well loved by the people. Most of his forty-three years of ministry were spent in Baton Rouge and New Orleans. Rev. Booth passed away unexpectedly on March 25, 1947 in Baton Rouge.

Rev. Clerville J. Thibodeaux was appointed as the French preacher to the area, a post he would serve for several years.

Rev. Thibodeaux was born in Labadieville in 1894. He and his wife Avelie were converted from Catholicism to Methodism through the efforts of Rev. Eugene Barrios. His wife was known to fill in for him in the pulpit when C.J. was ill. Later, when his first wife died, Rev. Thibodeaux remarried Edna Barrios, Eugene's daughter. Licensed as a local preacher in 1922, he was appointed to serve as a supply to the French Mission. Most of his thirty-seven year ministry was spent in the French Mission area. Rev. Thibodeaux lived a righteous life. It was said that he was an ideal pastor, especially in personal evangelistic work. He even got along with the Roman Catholics, who were willing to help him. He passed away in Labadieville on June 29, 1967.

Spurred on by a big revival in Golden Meadow in March, 1933, a church was built there that summer. Pastored by Rev. A.M. Martin, there were 60 members by the end of the year. Rev. Booth wrote to the Advocate to ask if someone would donate a piano to the Golden Meadow church.

One special Sunday in 1934 was "Houma Day," when money was raised throughout the Conference for the French Mission of Houma.

Starting at the corner of Main and Church Streets, Houma finally got paved streets in 1936. For many years before that, crushed oyster shells were used to cover the streets. It would still be many years before the outlying roads of the parish were paved.

In 1935, as previously mentioned, Clanton's Chapel was built at Dulac. The Methodist Church was in Dulac to stay, despite a reward from someone who offered "$500 to run the Methodists out of Dulac!"

Let's take a moment to look at the history of the Methodist Church among the Indians of Dulac.

DULAC INDIAN MISSION

As previously mentioned, Miss Ella Hooper left the MacDonell School for a while to work in Dulac with the Indians. Mr. George DeForest and his wife, from Akron, Ohio, had been sent by the Missionary Council to work with the Dulac Indians. Miss Hooper went to help them out. They would travel by boat to Dulac, teach the remainder of the day, stay overnight, teach the next morning, and then return to their home. They did this because it took quite a while to row the boat the necessary four miles each way. The community of Dulac was two miles below the end of the road.

They had been having Methodist preaching services since 1912 whenever a preacher, usually A.D. Martin, could make it. In addition, Miss Ella Hooper had been visiting them for years to hold Bible classes and distribute clothes and other goods. So many of the Indians were already familiar with the Methodists. Mrs. DeForest discovered that Miss Hooper had a sister, Wilhelmina, who taught school in Rosedale. She sent her an invitation to come for two weeks "to teach until the trapping season started." She came for a two week visit and ended up staying 33 years, until her retirement in 1965. She didn't even receive a salary until 1953. She later said, "I was not a missionary or a radical; I was a trained teacher, and there was a need for a trained teacher. So I stayed." With her sister in charge, Ella went back to MacDonell.

Miss Wilhelmina was known as "Miss Hoppy" to the children. She was thin and wore glasses, just like her sister Ella. Over the years, her skin bacame tanned from her many walks along the bayou and her English had a tint of a French accent.

The first class began on October 1, 1932. There were 75 students, ages six through twenty. Everyone was in the first grade, since none of them had ever been to school before. Classes were held in an old-fashioned, high ceiling overseer's home that Miss Hooper taught and lived in. Sometimes, classes were held out on the porch or in the yard under an oak tree. Besides teaching school, the Methodist workers would teach religious classes twice a week. The school was for all Indians, regardless of their religious beliefs. Miss Wilhelmina Hooper was assisted in the early days by a Miss Hoffpauir.

Miss Ella Hooper went to the school board to get their help. Indians weren't allowed in public school at that time. They asked Miss Hooper to survey the area to see how many Indians were involved. She found 300 possible students, only 75 of which were attending the Methodist school. The school board suggested that Miss Wilhelmina Hooper continue her operation of the Methodist school, which she did for twenty-two years.

Deaconess Mary Beth Littlejohn was appointed by the Council to replace Mrs. DeForest at Dulac in 1936. With Miss Wilhelmina, they were reaching 65 families, a total of 50 people. The work was divided into three areas: the church, the school, and the social service and rural extension work. The church membership was 50 in 1936. Worship services, given in French, were conducted once a month by a local French preacher.

After holding services in private homes and outdoors for years, Dulac finally received a church, named Clanton Chapel. Mr. T.G. Clanton, of Shreveport, provided the funds to build it. Bishop Dobbs and others were on hand for the dedication in May. An Indian feast was served afterwards. Most members of Clanton's Chapel in Dulac would go to church by boat. Services were held at 2:30 on Sunday afternoon. They had to wait for the arrival of the pastor from Houma. For the next few decades, the Dulac church would be served by the pastor stationed at Houma Heights in Houma. Kirby Verret, a local pastor, is now the pastor of Clanton Chapel.

The school program is the same as that of public schools. The day school for children had an enrollment of 40, and the night school for adults had an enrollment of 15. The enrollment was low this year because the bridge across Bayou Dulac had been out for a year, and the students couldn't get to the school. Afternoons were devoted to "extension" type schools for smaller communities down the bayous.

The social work extends to the 360 Indians within a three mile radius. They also made occasional visits to families further down the bayous. They brought clothes, medical help, and other items.

By 1938, the day school enrollment at the Dulac Indian Mission was up to 60. Day school was held from 7:30 A.M. to 12:30 P.M. The night school enrollment was 30. It was held from 6:30 to 8:30 at night. The church held worship services twice a month, Sunday school on Sunday mornings, Bible school on Sunday evenings, and a community sing once a month. The social activities included a Boys' and Girls' Industrial Club, a Young Folk Club, house-to-house visiting, a community library, and a game room.

In 1942, property (a piece of "Goat Island") was purchased for the Dulac Mission to enlarge the work in the area.

In 1950, a school building was finally constructed in Dulac for the Indians. Miss Wilhelmina Hooper now had a school to teach in. It has already been mentioned how Miss Ella Hooper came down to Dulac to help her sister. Miss Ione Gandy, of the MacDonell School, also came down to Dulac to help with the new school.

The Terrebonne Parish school board had finally agreed to build a school for the Indians. It was built in the summer of 1953 in front of the Methodist school. It had five classrooms and a kitchen. Later, in 1954, four more classrooms were added.

The Methodist school at Dulac was converted into a community center. It provided a kindergarten, adult literacy classes, religious instruction, dances, motion pictures, visitation, teenage and craft programs.

In 1960, a new Community Center was completed at Dulac. The open house was held on September 18, 1960. The director of the Community Center at that time was Mr. H. Carl Brunson. A dedication service was held. Rev. Rickey gave the invocation. Rev. Ira Robinson, pastor of Houma Heights and Dulac, rendered the benediction. The sermon was presented by Bishop Aubrey Walton. As Bishop Walton said, the Center was designed for "the development of Christian character ... to the broadening of mental horizons and the deepening of knowledge, that young and old may be awakened and informed."

Though the Center was damaged by Hurricane Juan in 1985, it has since been rebuilt.

After thirty-three years, Miss Wilhelmina Hooper retired from the Dulac Indian Mission in 1965. The Woman's Society of Christian Service presented her with an honorary life membership.

Rev. A.D. George: 1936-1938

Rev. A.D. George was appointed to the Houma charge in 1936. He served Houma for two years. The membership of the Houma charge was almost 600. There were eight churches in the charge and two parsonages. C.J. Thibodeaux was assigned as the supply French preacher to the area for the third year.

During Rev. George's tenure, the rolls were purged. Of the 656 members, 266 were removed in just one year. The number of churches on the Houma circuit decreased to four.

> Rev. George was born at Montpelier, Louisiana on September 20, 1887. After he was licensed to preach in 1908, he went to Centenary College. After college, he married Susan Ruth Hoffpauir. She was remembered as a good Bible teacher. The Georges worked together as a team. She always contributed her talents to his ministry. They had one son, one daughter, and one foster daughter.
>
> It was said that his congregations never wanted to give him up. Rev. George lived a life filled with good works. He died in Hattiesburg, Mississippi on July 12, 1974.

Evangelism meetings were still popular, but their length was getting shorter. April of 1937, however, brought an old time revival to Houma. It lasted from April 11 to 25. Rev. George said that he felt led to have a series of meetings. One of the most fruitful parts was the sessions held after each night's meetings. The pastor and his helpers would meet with those seeking counsel and prayer. In addition to a number of adults, twenty-five young people and children accepted Christ during the two weeks.

Now, let us look at a typical Sunday in the old Red Brick Church at this time. The Sunday schedule at this time consisted of: Sunday School at 9:30 a.m.; Morning Service at 10:45 a.m.; Epworth League at 6:30 p.m.; Evening Service at 7:15 p.m. Prayer meeting was held on Wednesday at 7:30 p.m.

The Sunday School started off the morning. Mr. J.H. Thatcher or Judge Robert Butler would teach the men's class. When things got crowded, they would hold class in the Thatcher Hotel across the street. Inside the sanctuary, Kleibert F. Martin would conduct a class in French. Rev. Martin, who always wore a hat, was also the church janitor and a local pastor.

One of the early classes that originated in the 1930's was taught by Mrs. Esther Kelly. Raised in Texas, she wanted a Sunday School class where you didn't need to understand French. After discussing it with Rev. Andrews, the class began meeting in the area between the two front steps of the church. Later, as the class grew, they met at Wurzlow's Florist behind the church. Although the name of the class has changed over the years, it still exists as the Wesley Friendship class.

The children would hold a Sunday School assembly in the central area downstairs. It would consist of a pledge, a prayer, and announcements. Then they would go to their individual rooms located along the sides of the downstairs level. The central area was used for other meetings (such as the Boy Scouts). It was noisy with the windows open, as they often were. Remember, they had no air conditioning. You could hear the cars passing by on the shell roads. The streets weren't paved until 1936. The pulpit was on a raised platform behind the altar and altar rail. There would often be flowers on the altar, arranged by Mrs. Esther Kelly. Mrs. Thatcher sat behind the piano on the left side of the sanctuary. The choir sang from behind the pulpit.

Old Mr. Babin would sit in the last pew of the old Red Brick Church. When it got 12 o'clock, he would always take out his pocket watch and wind it. Everyone in the church could hear it. They knew that the service would be (or should be) ending soon. Then, when he would leave, he would always say "tres bien" on his way out.

And Kliebert F. Martin would sit up front. He would always shout "Amen" in response to important points in the service.

One of the fixtures in the days of the Red Brick Church was the Thatchers ... Joseph Hunter and Dora. Mr. J.H. Thatcher came to the area in 1917 and was instrumental in developing the natural gas industry. He was the first member added to the roll by Rev. F.J. McCoy. He soon became one of the most involved, dedicated, and beloved members of the church. He served as Sunday school superintendent, chairman of the board of stewards, and was instrumental in the building of the Red Brick Church. It was said that he lived a "most beautiful life" and that he represented "everything that is clean and virtuous." The Terrebonne Press said that he was "as near perfection as mortal man could ever expect to be." Clearly, it was unfortunate for our church and our community that he was taken from us so early. He passed away in 1943. An indication of his character was expressed in a poem he wrote, entitled "My Creed."

MY CREED
by J.H. Thatcher

I thank God I am a Christian,
Let me live and die that way.
There is no place like heaven,
That gives me peace for which I pray.
It keeps my heart filled with love,
Burning bright to lead the way;
Holds me steadfast to my Saviour,
From which path don't let me stray.
I thank God I'm a Christian,
Let me live and die that way.

Mrs. Dora Thatcher played the piano and organ and directed the choir from 1920 to 1950. She was a long-time member of the Women's Society of Christian Service. She also served as president of the Mission School Board for many years.

Mrs. Thatcher always wore a hat and directed the choir by moving her hat to and fro. The choir wore black robes. The female choir members had to remove their jewelry before going into the sanctuary. They left the jewelry and their pocket books in a locked chest in a Sunday School room downstairs.

Besides the choir at church, Mrs. Thatcher founded and directed the one hundred voice Houma Community Chorus from 1923 to 1928. She also loved to travel. The social column of the newspaper was filled with tales of her travels.

Before coming to Houma, Mrs. Thatcher was director of music at Mansfield College. The Thatchers came to Houma in 1917 when her husband Joseph Hunter Thatcher bought the Lirette Gas Field. Mr. Thatcher helped to put in the gas distribution system in the town of Houma. He also build a hotel on the site of Houma's first Methodist church. Mr. Thatcher used to teach the men's Sunday School class in the area between the stairs. He passed away in 1943.

In 1972, Mrs. Dora Thatcher moved to New York to live with her daughter. Three years later she passed away. She is buried here in Terrebonne Parish with her husband.

Mrs. Thatcher is not the only woman to distinguish herself in serving the Houma Methodist Church. Other prominent women in the first half of the 20th century included Nettie Brunette, Thelma Ellender, and Ruth Patterson.

Miss Brunette was born a Roman Catholic six miles below Houma. As a youth, she would attend Catholic Mass and then go to Sunday School at the Methodist Church. After three years, she and two of her sisters joined the Methodist Church after hearing Rev. Breithaupt at a tent meeting. She lived two doors away from the parsonage on the property the church had sold in 1921. She worked as a cashier for Mr. Thatcher's gas company and as the manager of the Thatcher Hotel. Her jobs at church included church treasurer (for twenty years), lay delegate to Annual Conference, Sunday School teacher, and many more. A charter member of the Women's Society, she served as its treasurer for many years. Miss Brunette passed away in 1963.

Thelma Ellender came to Houma from St. Francisville in 1925. She married Claude Ellender, a prominent Houma attorney and the brother of Senator Allen Ellender, in 1928. Mr. Ellender, originally from Bourg, passed away in 1958. Mrs. Ellender has been a prominent member of the woman's societies of the Houma church over the years, serving in various capacities for over fifty years. She has also worked with children for many years. The large oak tree in the church's playground was named after her.

Ruth Carlson Patterson was from Fort Worth, Texas. She met and married Charles Ray Patterson in the Dallas area. They moved to Houma in 1939. Mrs. Patterson was known for her enthusiastic piano playing in church and for her work with the youth. Since 1952, the entire community would look forward to the Christmas displays in her yard. Mrs. Patterson passed away in 1982.

Rev. David F. Tarver: 1938-1941

Rev. David F. Tarver replaced Rev. George in 1938. He served Houma until 1941. Rev. Tarver, though a large man, was very soft-spoken. He gained weight while here because he loved the French cooking. He wore a frock-tailed coat when he preached. He was a sensitive, spiritual man who often used poetry in his sermons. He spoke in a down-to-earth language that everyone could understand. He also loved nature and used to talk about it in his sermons. It seems that he almost always shed tears while giving his sermons.

His wife, Velma, was the speaker of the family. She was a very supportive wife who tirelessly helped with the church. She is best remembered as a youth counselor. She would sometimes sing solos in church. The Tarvers had no children.

Rev. Tarver was ordered to report to Washington on December 29, 1941 for an examination to become a military chaplain. After the war, they moved to San Diego. Rev. Tarver went through a rough time of it when Mrs. Tarver passed away prematurely.

The budget for Rev. Tarver's first year was $2355. The pastor's salary was about $100 a month. The church's caretaker, Rev. Martin, was paid about $10 a month. Money was also allocated to pay for heaters and song books bought in 1938.

It may be that Rev. Tarver was the first Houma preacher to ask the members to make a pledge. He sent a very frank letter to members not long after he arrived in 1938. The letter described how ministers often pay for many church operating expenses out of their own pocket. These expenses included an automobile ($50/month), traveling to conferences ($120/year), adding books to his library ($10/month), and appropriate clothing. He noted that the pastor in Bogalusa, a town smaller than Houma, made $2400 annually (much more than the Houma pastor's salary). The Conference was still sending money ($50/month) to help the Houma church. This meant that the members needed to come up with $60 a month to balance the budget. Rev. Tarver suggested that members give $3 a week to the church; less than two dozen such donations would provide the necessary funds.

Evidently, the congregation responded to Rev. Tarver. The budget and contributions to the conference were paid in full. They were also able to fix up and refurbish the parsonage.

The weekly budget for 1938-1939 of $60.50 included: payment on the old debt ($875) on the parsonage - $16.83; the pastor's salary (paid each Sunday night at the church by the treasurer) - $30; the janitor - $2.50; insurance - $1.00; office supplies, bulletins - $1.27; benevolences and district work - $3.00; the presiding elder - $3.90; utilities - $2.00.

In 1939, the Methodist Protestant, the Methodist Episcopal, and the Methodist Episcopal, South Churches merged to form the Methodist Church. The Houma church had been a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. Because of the merger and the formation of the Houma Heights church, the original Methodist church would now be known as the First Methodist Church of Houma.

The Houma Heights Methodist Church held its official opening on Sunday, May 21, 1939. The first pastor, who had already been there for a year, was Oakley Lee. Rev. W.G. Cram, D.D. delivered the sermon. The area east of the Intracoastal Canal was increasing in population. So the Houma Heights Church was built on the southern end of the MacDonell campus. Much of the mission work down the bayous of Terrebonne Parish would be carried out by ministers working out of Houma Heights and/or the MacDonell School.

Easter Sunrise Services were held at this time at the MacDonell School. They were sponsored by the Senior Epworth League.

Vacation Bible School was very popular in 1940. There was an attendance of 119 at First Church, even though it had been held for less than five years. There were 42 women in the W.S.C.S. Of the 200 Sunday School members, 140 regularly attended.

It was 1941 and they were still paying on the Red Brick Church. Rev. Martin Hebert urged them to have a drive to pay off the remaining $1175 of the debt. The Houma church wrote to the Board of Church Extensions for financial help because they could only raise one third of that amount. The pastor gives a couple of reasons for this.

There was a division in the church between the members of the "old congregation" and the newer members. Neither group felt very motivated to pay off the debt. The older members remembered that Houma was a mission church and thought that the conference should help retire their debt. The newer members did not feel obligated to the debt since it was incurred before they arrived. Additionally, the expected askings had increased greatly in the last two years. But of the membership of approximately 150 members, only two thirds were active. And of those 100 active members, only about one third of them are financially able to help the church.

Somehow, they managed to pay off the debt in 1941. On January 4, 1942, the twenty year old mortgage was burnt.

Rev. E.B. Chaney: 1941-1943

In 1941, Rev. E.B. Chaney was appointed to the Houma church. He and his wife arrived with three young children. He was family-oriented. His family was from the New England area. He was an outgoing and ambitious young man. It was said that he had a flambuoyant preaching style. He was also a handsome man; it was said that many of the women went to church just to see him preach. He was a friendly man; everyone got close to him. He enjoyed working with the youth. He preached to the people, and not over them.

The MYF Council met in January to make plans for the year. The Methodist Youth Foundation replaced the Epworth League in 1939. The second Sunday of each month will be Defense Stamp Sunday. Each member will bring a ten cent war stamp (or ten cents to buy one). The third Sunday of each month will be recreational Sunday. Each Leaguer will bring supper and the group will attend evening worship together. Those present at the meeting were Charles Patterson (president), Vera Duplantis (vice-president), Marilyn Nicar (treasurer), Patsy McNeill (recreational chairman), Bea Picou (co-counselor), Mr. C.R. Patterson (publicity director), and Mrs. C.R. Patterson (counselor). Rev. E.B. Chaney was also there.

The oldest church bulletin that we have left is one for April 6, 1941. The order of worship printed in the bulletin is as follows.

Personal Prayer in this Sanctuary
Bell Chimes   Prelude
The Congregation Rising as the Choir Enters--All Singing
Hymn: 2 (Morning)   111 (Evening)
Apostles' Creed or Affirmations of Faith by All
Prayer: Pastoral, Congregational, Choral
Mediation: 126 (Morning)   127 (Evening)
(Reserved for Christenings, Specials)
Announcements
Congregational Scripture Psalm: 539 (Morning) 540 (Evening)
The Gloria Patri
The Offering and Offertory
The Choral Anthem or Hymn: 145 (Morning)   149 (Evening)
The Message of the Ministry
Hymn: 142 (Morning)   140 (Evening)
(Reserved for the Sacraments of Communion and Baptism and for the Reception of Members)
Benediction: Pastoral, Choral, Congregational
Postlude   Fellowship Greetings

The announcements in this bulletin illustrate some of the events going on at the church at this time. The topic for Sunday's "Young Peoples Meeting" was "Getting Ready for Easter" ... led by Annette Bynum. Altar flowers for the month were given by Mrs. Elvire Duplantis. A Deep Dish Dinner was to be held on Monday, April 7, at 7 p.m. All adult members were invited. Entertainment was provided afterwards. A social and business meeting of the Women's Sunday School Class was scheduled for Tuesday at Mrs. Claude Ellender's home. A Sunrise Service was held on Good Friday at 5:45 a.m. The W.S.C.S., led by Mrs. H.E. Hendrick, was scheduled to study the Christian Mission in China. The Spiritual Life Committee had decided to start a library and requested the loan of devotional books. This appears to be the first attempt at starting a church library.

The weekly calendar for the church was as follows. On Sunday they held Sunday School (9:30 a.m.), Worship (11 a.m.), Young People (6:30 p.m.), and Worship (7:30 p.m.). On Wednesdays, the Young People held a meeting at 7 p.m. The Adult Choir met at 7:30 p.m. on Fridays. The four women's meetings were held on Tuesdays: W.S.C.S. business (2 p.m. on the 1st Tuesdays), W.S.C.S. social (3 p.m. on the 3rd Tuesdays), Sunday School Class (3 p.m. on the 2nd Tuesdays), and the Spiritual Life Group (2 p.m. on the 4th Tuesdays).

Though not mentioned in this bulletin, Watch night services were held on New Years' Eve. A social would begin at 9:30 p.m. The service began at 11:30 p.m.

The presiding officers of the church were printed on the back of the bulletin. The following were the chairman of their respective committees: E.K. Bynum (Stewards), C.P. Smith (Trustees), Mrs. Claude Ellender (W.S.C.S.), Mrs. David Tarver (Spiritual Life), Mrs. H.E. Hendrick (Adult Council), Mrs. M.S. Ballwin (Fellowship), Miss Vera Duplantis (Young People), and Miss Bea Picou (Publicity). Miss Nettie Brunette was treasurer. K.F. Martin was sexton. Miss Helen Smith was the adult choir director. Mrs. R.P. Haviland was the editor of the bulletin. Mrs. L.L. Gardner was the financial secretary. Mrs. J.H. Thatcher was the director of the choir and the church school. The associate choir directors were Mrs. T.A. Morris, Mrs. Fred Harter, and H.E. Hendrick.

The Houma Heights church was finally completed in the spring of 1942. Dr. Holmes, the district superintendent, preached for the opening ceremony, held April 5, 1942. The pastor at that time was Rev. M.S. Robertson.

The December 3, 1942 issue of the New Orleans Christian Advocate had a picture from the Houma church on its cover. It showed a service flag made by the women of the church. A cross of stars, with each star representing a serviceman from the congregation, was on display. Mrs. Lydia Winders & Mrs. Octavia Marcel were also in the picture. This is the only time a picture from Houma graced the front page of the Advocate in 90 years.

On February 18, 1943, Rev. Chaney was assigned to Crawford Memorial Methodist Church in New York City. He had asked for the transfer, since his family was from that area. He preached for three more Sundays. His last sermon, on March 7, was titled "So Loved ---." He traded places with a preacher from New York.

Dr. Albert S. Hurley: 1943-1949

Rev. Chaney's departure in 1943 brought us Dr. Albert S. Hurley. Rev. Hurley stayed in Houma for six years. Born in Franklin, Texas, in 1907, he went to the University of Texas when he was 16 years old. He moved to New York, where he attended Yale, Union Theological School, and Columbia University. While preaching in a Methodist church in New York, he met his bride-to-be. They got married in 1933.

Rev. Hurley wanted to return back to Texas. He asked Bishop Smith in Houston to find him an appointment. The Bishop told him that there was nothing available in Texas, but he could use Dr. Hurley in Houma, Louisiana. So, after preaching in New York for 13 years, he moved down to south Louisiana. They arrived on the third Sunday in March 1943.

Rev. Hurley is best remembered as an educated, but endearing minister. It seems that everyone liked Rev. Hurley. His sermons were always thoughtful and intellectual, sometimes going over the heads of many in the congregation. He realized this and toned down his sermons after a while. And although his sermons may have been long, he always kept your attention.

Due to a congenital disease, his eyesight had already begun failing when he arrived in Houma. But his memory was so good that you thought that he was reading from a carefully prepared script. When he visited Houma in the 1950's, he brought his sermon to the pulpit with him. Upon closer inspection, the sermon was nothing more than scribbly lines. He was preaching from memory, but he had brought his "sermon" to give the impression that he was using a script.

His memory for voices was excellent. He could meet someone after several years and recognize them by voice alone.

Rev. Hurley believed in visiting his congregation. He visited every day of the week. He would walk everywhere. Sometimes he would set out on foot and his wife would pick him up at the end of the day. His wife helped out in many other ways, such as playing the piano. She said she also liked the town of Houma; you could know just about "everyone" ... it was a friendly town.

The church tried to help out with the war effort. They worked a lot with the Red Cross in knitting sweaters for navy men. They also helped the Red Cross to roll bandages. We held food and money drives for the war effort. Rev. Hurley said that the community seemed to take the war in stride. Mid-week services were also better attended during the war.

Sunday mornings started with Sunday School. The attendance at Sunday School was regularly over 150. Rev. Hurley taught the men's class at that time, still being held in the Thatcher Hotel. The woman's class and French class were still upstairs in the church.

Worship service generally had 60-70 in attendance. Mrs. Thatcher played the piano in the morning. Although sometimes Mrs. Clyde Martin or Mrs. Patterson would play. When the church's first organ was purchased (by the Hurleys), it was placed on the left, and the piano was moved to the right side.

The MYF was very active. Mrs. Ruth Patterson was the counselor at this time. After MYF, the youth would stay for the evening service, when the youth choir would perform. Mrs. Patterson usually played for the evening service. She loved to play songs from the Cokesbury Hymnal. They say enthusiastic playing often made the "rafters ring out." The evening services typically had over 50 people in attendance. The youth choir alone would sometimes consisted of 25 young people.

Wednesday nights were for youth meetings when Rev. Chaney, who was more oriented towards youth, was here. Towards the end of his tenure, prayer meetings, led by Nettie Brunette were held on Wednesday nights. When Rev. Hurley came, he led the prayer meetings.

Rev. Hurley would also preach at the Gibson church in the afternoon on the first Sunday of each month.

The church was already beginning to talk about a new church building. The Red Brick Church was paid off in 1943. Some of the older members were not too anxious to get into debt again. Plus, World War II forced them to put any such plans on hold.

The church budget for 1945-46 was $7375. Some of the expenses in this budget were: $651 - benevolences, $500 - office supplies, $225 - utilities, $2800 pastor's salary.

When Rev. Hurley arrived back in 1943, First Methodist Church had 189 members. The Sunday School had a membership of 255. By the time he left in 1949, there were 301 church members.
After retiring from the pulpit, Rev. and Mrs. Hurley moved to Franklin, Louisiana.

Rev. C. Reginald Hardy: 1949-1951

In 1949, Rev. Hurley was replaced by Rev. C. Reginald Hardy. Rev. Hardy stayed in Houma for only two years. He was a large man who seemed very reserved and formal. It seems that Rev. Hardy didn't put too much preparation into his sermons. He seemed to look down upon the rural folk. He wasn't the most popular of preachers; people found it hard to get close to him. He was the last of the fire and brimstone type of minister. He was also the last minister to wear a frock tail coat. A while after he left us, he moved on to the Texas Conference.

Not all of the preachers that served the area were popular. Some, like Rev. Hardy, just didn't quite fit in. It wasn't that they were poor preachers. Preachers and congregations sometimes just didn't go well together. It would be extremely rare to find a pastor that everyone liked. One preacher we had did not stay with us long; but soon after, he found another appointment that kept him for ten years. Then again, there are those people like Miss Nettie Brunette. Rev. Rickey said that "she is loyal to each pastor, and welcomes the next one as if the Lord sent him." Ideally, that is how we all should look at our pastors.

As the church grew, more space was needed. A quanset hut was placed on the side of the church after World War II. It was used for Sunday School classes and for the youth meetings. It was also used for square dancing. It would have been unthinkable to have dancing inside the church building. Some members still objected to the dancing in the hut.

The Houma Heights minister (Rev. Mitchell Sanford) was now serving four other preaching locations down the bayous. The Houma Heights Church was located just south of the MacDonell School and included the staff and pupils in its ministry.

Houma Heights was left to be supplied for 1950. Rev. A.D. Martin was appointed as a local preacher in Houma. The membership at First Methodist Church of Houma was 403. Gibson is listed as having one member. Houma Heights is listed as having 41 members; but there were 195 inactive members of that church! Other local churches included Bayou Blue (99 members), Dulac (104 members), Lockport (38 members), and Pointe aux Chene (39 members).

Dr. Sam Nader: 1951-1956

The year 1951 brought a new preacher, Dr. Sam Nader. The congregation had sent word to the bishop that we needed a leader. So they sent Rev. Nader, who had participated in building programs in all of his pastorates. He was what you would call today a "mover and a shaker." He brought out the best in people. Rev. Nader was the driving force behind the new church building. They even had to tear down the walls of the Sunday School rooms to make room for tables for the building drive dinners. Rev. Nader really knew how to raise money. He even got people outside of the church to contribute ... merchants and businessmen from other denominations. He didn't always preach about money; but outside of the sanctuary, he knew how to raise it.

Rev. Nader was born in Beirut, Lebanon. He was the son of a Greek Orthodox priest. Upon moving to America, he grew up in Shreveport, where he received a local preacher's license at age 15. While he was pastoring in Houma, the congregation paid to send him to Lebanon to see his father for the first time. When he came back, he put on a slide show of his trip for family night.

Rev. Nader took a personal interest in people's lives. He had a way of making you like him. He always wore a smile. If you weren't at church, he'd call on you that afternoon. Although he was always working, he always had time to talk to you. He enjoyed working with the youth. He would keep tabs on the members who were away at college.

He often ended up finishing the Sunday bulletin on Saturday night. He hired the first church secretary, Velma Hebert, who had been working at the MacDonell home.

Rev. Nader drove an old Chrysler that wasn't in the best of shape. So the church got together and bought him a new car. Rev. Nader's wife, Esma, though always with her kids, was always there to help out.

His preaching style was enthusiastically accepted. He brought the gospel down to your level. His sermons were down to earth ... to the point. After hearing him preach, you felt challenged. Rev. Nader was fond of preaching on Paul. He also liked to interject common items into the Biblical setting ... "Paul picked up his Parker 51 fountain pen and wrote ..."

During Rev. Nader's tenure, one of our own members decided to enter the ministry. Lionel Marcel went on to become a Methodist minister in the Louisiana Conference. He attributes at least part of his decision on Rev. Nader's influence. Rev. Nader would let Lionel preach on Sunday nights when he was in town. The pastor at Houma Heights would also invite Lionel over to preach. The church family was also supportive. There were a number of times when Mrs. Patterson would place a $100 bill into Lionel's hands to help him out with expenses. Rev. Marcel is still serving in the Louisiana Conference.

The Board of Stewards appointed a planning committee to consider the construction of a new church building. The Red Brick Church was overflowing. When it was built, an average service contained 75 members and the Sunday School attendance was about 50. The church now had about 500 members with an average Sunday School attendance of 185.

The first task was to select the site for the new church. One of the first sites they looked at was on West Main, where a large grocery store now stands. Instead, they picked a site on Little Bayou Black Drive. More property at the West Main location could have been bought for the same money, but the neighborhood was prettier and more serene on Little Bayou Black. In 1882, the Berger brothers built Crescent Plantation on Little Bayou Black Drive. The property was later sold. But Henry Berger bought back a portion of the plantation that included the house in 1932. The plantation had been divided and was now called the Crescent Park Addition. Berger sold part of the property to his daughter, Minty Toups, and to Frank Peavey. Judge Ashby Pettigrew owned the western half of the block. A month before he died, Henry Berger sold an option (for $1000) to sell the rest of the property he had bought in 1932 to the First Methodist Church. On the last day of 1951, a site committee purchased the property for $21,000 from the heirs of Henry Berger, who had passed away the previous month. The Crescent Plantation home was dismantled and used by C.R. Patterson to build a home for his son. The front door of the Plantation home stood approximately where the door of the Financial Secretary's office is today.

By November 1952, the Methodists had raised $119,000 towards the new church. A special service was held on November 9. Five laypersons spoke on various aspects of the building drive. After the service, a dinner on the grounds of the proposed new church was held for one hundred and fifty persons.

A lot (and house) located behind the church was purchased in 1953 from Robert H. Reeves to be used for a parsonage. Henry Berger sold the lot (lot #6, located on the northeast corner of block 29) to Frank Peavy, who in turn sold it to Robert H. Reeves in 1945. The old parsonage on 814 High St. was sold to the Houma Oil Company for $12,500 on November 3, 1953.

The year 1951 brought a note of sadness to the First Methodist Church. Miss Bea Picou, a faithful member, was killed in an airplane crash in Liberia, Africa in 1951. She was a stewardess. For years afterward, Miss Brunette gave out the Bea Picou Award to a Senior youth who exhibited "faithfulness, eagerness to help, attendance, and other qualities." Bea was Miss Brunette's niece.

Just a year after Bea Picou was killed, the church was shocked when Mr. C.R. "Pat" Patterson had a heart attack and passed away on December 15, 1952. Mr. Patterson, born in 1902, had come to Houma from Texas in 1939. He was an active civic leader who had built up several businesses in town. He had been named Terrebonne's Citizen of the Year in 1949. A strong supporter of the church, he would be deeply missed by the church family and the community. The Sunday

School class that met in the Fellowship Hall ... the Patterson Memorial Class ... named itself after Mr. Patterson.

The congregation was anxious to build the new church. A brochure printed in 1953 stated that the church would be built that year. It contained architectural plans and illustrations of the proposed church. As the brochure shows, the first plans were basically the same as the finished church, although there were a few changes that were made. People were encouraged to pay for a part of the church as a memorial, which would be honored with an engraved plaque. These plaques can still be seen. The cost for some of these memorials were as follows.

Sanctuary	$75,000	Choir Room	$ 1,500
Foyer	5,000	Pastor's Office	1,500
Chancel	10,000	Tower/Steeple	10,000
Portico	5,000	General Office	1,000
Crib Room	1,000	A/C and Heating	15,000
Nursery	2,000	Education Bldg.	50,000
Classrooms	2,000	Fellowship Hall	20,000
Kitchen	5,000	Parlor	3,000
Parsonage	20,000	Bell Tower Room	1,500
Pulpit	750	Sanctuary Window	1,500
Altar	750	Baptismal Fount	750

In an August, 1954 bulletin, several comments on the new church were printed. Mrs. R.B. Edmonson said, "I think the building program is wonderful!" Hayes Marcel said, " Our new buildings are needed badly for all of us. The building program is planned to meet the needs of our Church now and in the future." George Augustat stated that, "We are now in one of the largest endeavors that First Church has ever undertaken, that of building a new church. ... I am sure with our spiritual attitude and divine guidance we will pass our goal."

The general campaign was led by J.W. Bolton and D.W. Rhea. The entire congregation was divided into groups and committees to reach their goal.

The Red Brick Church was sold on November 8, 1955 to the Terrebonne Parish Police Jury for $50,000. The money was spent on the new church.

The last services in the Red Brick Church were evening services held on Maundy Thursday and Good Friday on the last week of March. The last sermon delivered in the Red Brick Church on Friday was on "The Seven Last Words".

CHAPTER 6

THE CATHEDRAL ON THE BAYOU

The formal opening service of the new church took place at 11 a.m. on April 1, 1956 ... which was Easter Sunday. The bulletin included a three page history of the Houma church, the order of worship, the contributors of the various memorials, and miscellaneous notes. Speakers that day included Rev. Sam Nader, Dr. R.R. Branton (Lafayette District Superintendent), Dr. Edward W. Harris (Baton Rouge District Superintendent), and Bishop Paul E. Martin. Dr. Albert Hurley and Rev. Franklin McCoy, former pastors of the church, were also there.

In the guest book, Bishop Martin wrote that this church was made possible by "inspired leadership and the cooperation of dovoted and consecrated church members." Rev. Branton wrote that it was "a great day in the life of this church." Rev. Harris wrote that it was "a labour of love - complete in every detail - truly glorifying the name of God."

The new church seated 465 people; 340 in the sanctuary, 88 in the balcony, and 37 in the choir. The sanctuary ceiling reaches 36 feet into the air. The walls are of St. Joe sand brick made in Slidell. The pews and other furniture in the sanctuary are made of white Appalachian oak. The Fellowship Hall can seat 240 for a meeting and 170 for a banquet. The copper steeple reaches a height of 105 feet. A statue of Christ, titled "Come Unto Me" is above the front doors. The statue was made in Dallas especially for this church. Some members of the church didn't like the idea of having the statue, but Rev. Nader talked them into it. A round stained glass window above the altar depicts Christ in prayer. This window and the ten large (24 feet tall) windows along the sides of the church were ordered from Judson Studios in California. The brass and aluminum cross above the altar was made in Dallas. The altar is made of Italian marble. The educational building has ten classrooms that can accomodate 450 students. It is made of Colonial sand mould brick, trimmed with buff Indiana limestone. The style of the church is a blend of Colonial and Georgian. The architect was J. Murrell Bennett of Dallas, Texas. The projected cost of the new church was originally $250,000. It eventually cost about $400,000 ... $323,000 for the building and the rest for furnishings.

An Open House was held later that day from 3 to 5 in the afternoon and 8 to 10 that night. A Vesper Communion Service was held at 7 that evening.

It was announced that the church would try to pay off the bills in three years. "Debt free by '59" was the motto. Although the intentions were good, it would take them nine years to actually pay off the debt.

The completion of the church meant the departure of Rev. Nader. He left after accomplishing a great deal. He came here to get a job done, and he did it. But when he left, he passed down a bundle of bills to his successor. Rev. Nader and his wife recently retired and live in Lubbock, Texas.

Dr. Benedict Galloway: 1956-1960

The bishop replaced Rev. Nader in 1956 with Rev. Benedict Galloway. Rev. Nader had gotten the church built and left for Lake Charles. Now Rev. Galloway would have to make sure it was paid for. Following a popular preacher is always rough. Rev. Galloway may have felt pressured to follow in Sam Nader's footsteps. As his wife, Eloise, told him ... he should just be himself, don't try to be Sam. Rev. Galloway was more formal and serious than Rev. Nader, though he had his lighter side. He even taught square dancing at the church, much to the dismay of some of the older members. Though he wasn't as outgoing as Nader and it took a lot to make him laugh, everyone seemed to like Rev. Galloway and his wife. He was also an educated man who was very methodical. His sermons had that intellectual edge that Rev. Hurley had brought to Houma; and sometimes they ran a bit long. As one member, Duck Marcel, would say ... he delivered the "full load" on some days. Some still remember the food fundraisers held by the women in the church. Like Rev. Tarver, it seems that Rev. Galloway was fond of our French cooking and put on a few pounds. He also liked to play golf.

Rev. Galloway was married in 1941 to Eloise Holt. They have two daughters. Eloise was our first preacher's wife to have a college degree, having received a bachelors degree in social studies at NSU in 1955. She helped Benedict in his pastorates by teaching Sunday School, working as youth counselor, working with the women's societies, and doing all of the other tasks a minister's wife is supposed to do. They now live in Shreveport, Louisiana.

At each of his first three pastorates, Rev. Galloway was involved in building new sanctuaries and educational buildings. Upon arriving in Houma, he found the building done, but the bills unpaid.

When Rev. Galloway arrived, he had to immediately come up with $50,000 to pay a past due bank note. The contractor and church builder had gone bankrupt. Besides this, money was needed for the next note and to maintain regular church operations. Aided by the laity, Rev. Galloway got it done. Fortunately, this was in the dawn of the oil age and money was flowing. In his first year, the chimes were bought, the sanctuary carpeting was laid down, and the parsonage was renovated. The membership of the church went from 710 to 809 during Rev. Galloway's tenure. The Sunday School increased from 367 to 680 by 1960. The typical attendance at the morning services was about 150 for the first service and 130 for the second service. The evening service also averaged about 150. Sunday School attendance was a little over 300.

To illustrate the church finances at that time, the church budget for 1957-58 was $72,565. The budget had increased ten-fold over the budget of ten years ago. Of course, over $35,000 went to pay off the building and furniture notes. The pastor's salary had risen to $8,100. The conference askings were now close to $5,000. The staff had increased to include a secretary ($2,100), janitors ($3,220), and choir directors ($440).

Annual Spiritual Life Missions were held. These were revivals that brought in preachers from elsewhere in the state to lead services from Sunday through Friday. Morning devotions were broadcast on KCIL. Vacation Bible School was still being held. Bible studies were held on Wednesday nights.

Family Nights were held on Friday nights. Members would get together for a meal and entertainment. This practice was revived under the pastorship of Rev. Bowdon years later.

The youth choir was named the Herald Choir. One of the directors of the choir at this time was Gayle Hanna.

Mrs. Patterson gave the Patterson Memorial Class a set of the Interpreter's Bible reference books. They can still be found in the church library.

Among the church organists from the 50's to the 60's were Mrs. Patterson, Mrs. Clyde Martin, Mrs. Norman Smith, Mrs. Albert Lloyd, Miss Evelyn Martin, Mrs. T.H. Richards, Miss Gayle Hanna, Miss Julia Anding, Richard Whitten, and Allie Goodson. Among the choir directors were H.F. Lane, Mrs. J.L. Davis, Miss Jacquelyn Cocke, Mrs. H.B. Watson, Jr., Mrs. M.H. Rigsby, and Mrs. W.M. Carnicom.

A letter sent out informing the congregation of Pledge Sunday noted that an important consideration for the next year will be an Educational Director. The matter had been brought up for several years, but no action had been taken as of yet. It would be over thirty years before our church would get an Educational Director.

A Dedication Service for the church memorials was held on April 24, 1960. Some of the memorials listed were as follows.

Fellowship Hall	by Mr./Mrs. Charles Patterson, Sr.
Steeple	by Mr./Mrs. Charles Patterson, Sr.
Balcony	by the George Augustat Family
Parlor	by Mr./Mrs. Wade W. Scott
Arcade	by the C.E. Bridges Family
Rose Window	by the Brunette Family in memory of Mr./Mrs. C.A. Brunette
Altar	by George K. Ferguson in memory of Charles Patterson, Sr.
Pulpit	by Helen Smith in memory of Mr./Mrs. C.P. Smith
Christ Statuary	by Mr. R.B. Edmonson in honor of his wife
Foyer	by the Thatcher Family in memory of the late J.H. Thatcher, Sr.
Portico	by the Marcel Family in memory of the late Mr./Mrs. Freddie Marcel
Offering Plates & Candleabras	by Friends in memory of the late Charles Patterson, Sr.

Dr. Henry A. Rickey: 1960-1963

Rev. Galloway was replaced by Rev. Henry A. Rickey in 1960. They actually "switched" places. Rev. Galloway became the District Superintendent of the New Orleans District, which had been previously held by Rev. Rickey.

> Rev. Rickey was born in Jacksonville, Alabama on February 18, 1908. His father, a couple of uncles, and a great-grandfather were all Methodist ministers. The Methodist Church was in his blood.
>
> He was an intelligent man ... "one of the brightest minds in the conference" some would say. He was an incisive man of keen convictions.
>
> Rev. Rickey married Nell Honeycutt on June 18, 1934. They had two children. Rev. Rickey and his wife enjoyed socializing, but she never seemed to fit in as the preacher's wife. She was completely different than her predecessor, Eloise Galloway. Nell was known as a fragile woman. She was a red head who used to be a dancer. She stood by her husband, but never really got involved in church activities. This perhaps caused some animosity with the old members of the church. Traditionally, the preacher's wife had always helped with the church activities.
>
> He served around the state, but spent a good bit of his ministry in the New Orleans area. He retired in 1975 and moved to Shreveport. He was killed in an automobile accident on November 6, 1976 as he was on his way to get plants for his garden.

Rev. Rickey had a tendency to add people to the rolls after just one visit with them. He didn't do much visiting himself; that was left for Larry Robertson to do. He put a lot of members on the roll that way.

He was often commenting on how ugly he was. He claimed to be a member of the Ugly Club. Rev. Rickey loved to sing. He would even have songs pasted in the hymnal if he wanted to sing them and they weren't in the hymnal.

He was honored in 1961 when Centenary College presented him with a Doctor of Divinity degree.

Rev. Rickey didn't have a good relationship with the Pastor-Parish Relations committee. In fact, his departure was a forced one. He fell into the same category as did Rev. Hardy ... the pastor and the congregation weren't a good combination.

Houma got its first associate pastor in 1961. Rev. Larry D. Robertson served Houma for two years under Rev. Rickey and one year under Rev. Douglas. "Little Larry," as some called him, came here right out of seminary. His two children were born here in Houma.

Some days you could walk into his office and his baby would be sitting in the desk drawer. He worked with the youth and visited people in their homes. He would usually preach the Sunday night services.

A typical Sunday evening at this time included Senior MYF Council at 4 p.m., MYF at 5:30 p.m., youth choir rehearsal at 6:30 p.m., and evening worship at 7 p.m. The evening worship consisted of four hymns, a prayer, offeratory, an anthem, and a sermon by Rev. Robertson. It ended with altar prayer.

The membership of First Church of Houma for the past year was 938. The average attendance was 310. There were 15 tithers in the church. We still owed $48,650 on the church. There were still two morning services. The Herald Choir sang at the first service and the Chancel Choir sang at the second. W.S.C.S. Circles at this time included: Goodwill, Mary-Martha, Fidelity, Liberty, and Friendship. The MYF was divided into three sections, Jr., Intermediate, and Sr. In January 1961, church membership was divided into neighborhood zones. Family night dinners were held.

A "Battle of the Bayou" was held in 1961. Rev. Rickey said he could win 100 new members during the year and challenged the church's Commission of Membership and Evangelism to do likewise.

Revivals were still being held all around the conference. Bishop Walton had led one at our church in 1961. Dr. Rickey led a revival in Natchioches in 1963.

One was conducted at Houma from March 31 through April 5 of 1963, with a prayer vigil held March 29-30. Services were led by Rev. C.W. Quaid of Lake Charles. Mrs. Patterson played the organ and Dr. Rickey led the singing. A different group from the church was to fill the pews each night.

The membership at Houma Heights in 1960 was 135. Rev. Ira M. Robinson left and was replaced by Rev. Collins D. Pinkard. Bayou Blue had 134 members and Dulac had 126 members.

Charles Crenshaw graduated from Terrebonne High at this time and planned to become a Methodist minister. He gave a sermon in April before leaving for Centenary College.

We were still holding quarterly conferences at this time. The spring conference for 1963 was conducted by the District Superintendent, Rev. Jerome Cain. He also preached the message.

Dr. Luman Douglas: 1963-1966

Rev. Luman Douglas replaced Rev. Rickey in 1963. Although his eyes were failing, people remember that he preached a good message and delivered it well. He didn't really want to come here, though. He was very business-like, but he had nervous problems. He couldn't relate to the board members. Still, members remember how he used to pass out sticks of gum to the children. He was also the one that came up with the idea of a "flower calender" to help Mrs. Kelly to arrange the flowers on the altar.

Donald Autrey came to Houma as an associate pastor while Rev. Douglas was here. Like Robertson, he came here right out of seminary. It seems that the relationship between him and Rev. Douglas didn't work out. He stayed here only one year.

> Rev. Luman E. Douglas was born in Bienville, Louisiana on May 11, 1910. He was licensed to preach in 1926. While attending SMU, he met and married Mary Eleanor Kiker on Decemer 28, 1932. He came back to Louisiana in 1935. He served in southern Louisiana.
>
> He was honored with a Doctor of Divinity Degree from his Alma Mater, Taylor University, in 1965.
>
> Rev. Douglas loved the Methodist Church. He brought integrity and dedication to his work. It was said that whatever he did, he did well. He served in a number of positions in various branches of the church. When he had retired and his sight was failing, he could recognize his "brethren" by the sound of their voice.
>
> Rev. Douglas passed away on September 12, 1985.

A dedication service was held at 11 a.m. on November 28, 1965. Among those in the service were Bishop Aubrey G. Walton, Rev. Luman E. Douglas, Rev. Jerome Cain, Dr. B. Joseph Martin, Dr. Henry A. Rickey, and Dr. Benedict A. Galloway. The congregation was able to sit on pew cushions. These had been bought with money from a fund started by the late J.F. Lane and the Pattersons. A catered dinner on the grounds followed the service. It was paid for by members of the church. The mortgage for the "new" church was finally paid off and the mortgage was burnt on November 28, 1965.

The average attendance at morning worship services was 347 in 1965. Of the 533 on the Sunday School rolls, 314 was the average attendance.

Rev. A. Jerome Cain: 1966-1976

Rev. A. Jerome Cain was appointed to Houma in 1966. He was assisted in his ministry by his wife, Elsie. The Cains' ministry was really a team effort. Rev. Cain, like Rev. Rickey, joked about being a member of the Ugly Club. He got along with most people. Rev. Cain started the church's ecumenical push. He also started the work towards the Activity Building. The first church bus was acquired at this time. Rev. Cain was selected as Houma's Most Useful Citizen in 1974, our only pastor to receive this honor.

The church borrowed $8,500 in 1966 to pave the church parking lot and to build a garage for the parsonage. The church note had just been paid off the previous year.

About the same time, the church was saddened to lose Calvin Hebert, Jr. He died after injuries received in a helicopter crash during the Vietnam War. Calvin was the only member of our church to die in the Vietnam War.

In November of 1967, a group of older adults met to form a senior citizens' club. About 20 people attended that first meeting. After a contest, the name picked by Mrs. Ida Andruss was selected ... Was Young Once (WYO). When she was working on a household task, she had been said to herself, "I used to be able to do this. I was young once." So the name of the group was born. One of the other names submitted was "The Antiques."

In 1969, the Wesley Methodist Church on Canal Street was forced to tear down the church building. It had stood on the corner since 1889, but had deteriorated through the years. Hurricane Betsy finally created some unrepairable damages. Since there were only 32 members in 1969, the Rev. Henry Gage asked for help in building a new church. The new church, costing $20,000, was built with money raised by the congregation as well as contributions from other Methodist churches. First Church of Houma gave over $1000. Two years later, the Negro and white conferences of the United Methodist Church of Louisiana approved of a merger.

A called charge conference was held after the 11:00 service on November 16, 1969. The decision was made to buy the remainder of the eastern portion of block 29. Mrs. Minty Toups had obtained the property between the church and parsonage from her father, Henry Berger. She was paid $25,000 for the lot and the house. The house was used for Sunday School classes for a while, but was moved so that the area could be used for parking. Her garage was converted into a meeting room for the youth. It was called the Youth Hut.

The property was bought with the intention of building an activity building. Several versions of the building were considered, though most were similar. It was to consist of a large gym, several meeting rooms, and a kitchen. Mrs. Cain was a strong supporter of this building, although some members objected to a major building project. After all, the church note was paid off less than five years before and the parking lot/garage note was paid off earlier in 1969.

Ricky Hebert graduated from Centenary College in 1969. During the summers in 1968 and 1969, he helped out as a summer worker at church. He later became an ordained Methodist minister in the Louisiana Conference.

By 1970, the church membership was 1171 people. There was an average attendance of 256 at Sunday School out of a membership of 440. The 11:00 Services were being broadcast over the radio on KJIN occasionally.

Youth began attending Camp Brewer during the summer. They would attend for a week with youth from other Louisiana Methodist churches. Later on, the youth began going to Caney Lake in north Louisiana for the summer trip. At Caney Lake, the entire camp was rented for our youth group. When Rev. Cain left, these trips stopped.

Due to the merger in 1968, the W.S.C.S. became the United Methodist Women in 1973.

One of the biggest youth trips ever taken was when the Senior High UMY went to Singing River Ranch in Colorado. Six adults, including the Cains, and thirty-one youth made the trip in "Old Blue." Old Blue was bought for $350 and made many trips during its "lifetime." After travelling for over 3,000 miles, the group made it safely home from Colorado.

The church had a scare shortly after, when Rev. Cain was hospitalized. Rev. Hurley filled in for him in our pulpit. Thankfully, Rev. Cain made a full recovery and was preaching again after about ten weeks.

During Rev. Cain's tenure, we had several ministers who came to help out ... usually in the summer. In 1975, for example, John Clarke was our minister in training for the summer. He would preach at the evening services. Another "summer minister" was John Williams.

Rev. Hugh Baker: 1976-1978

Rev. Cain was followed in 1976 by Rev. Hugh Baker. It seems as though Rev. Baker met with the same problem that several other ministers had faced ... following a popular pastor. He arrived here late due to illness. He was a charasmatic preacher. While here, the major project in the church was the construction of the Activities Building. Though Mrs. Baker suffered through health problems during their stay here, she liked to help out with the women's projects.

The bishop, Finis A. Crutchfield, and D.S., Kenneth McDowell, held service at the Gibson church at 8 a.m. on Sunday, January 11, 1976, to commemorate the early Methodists who built the church in 1849. Services are still held on the first and third Sundays of the month. The building is opened with the original key. You may want to look at the hymnals, Bibles, and Sunday School books which date back to the 1800's. You can look for a hole in the floor that was drilled to help water drain out in 1882 when the building flooded. The pews are the original set. The kerosene lamps were converted to electricity some years ago.

The Youth Hut was torn down in the summer of 1977. The Activity Center was completed in 1978 at a cost of a quarter of a million dollars. Besides the gym area, there was a kitchen, women's room, Boy Scout room, and a chapel. The chapel was dedicated to Hayes Marcel, Sr., who had passed away the previous November. The stained glass cross in the chapel can be seen from Boston Lane. It was made by Hartwell Lewis.

A youth directer, Butch Kent, was hired while Rev. Baker was here. The youth began their annual chicken barbeque to raise funds for a summer trip. The first trip funded by the Senior High BBQ was to Disneyworld in August, 1977. In 1978, they went to Arkansas. Mr. Kent left us in 1978, since we were now getting two pastors.

A preschool was begun at this time, also. Martha South was the director. The church secretary was Pat Fanguy.

Rev. John Winn & Rev. Carole Cotton-Winn: 1978-1988

Houma got its first man and wife team as ministers in 1978. Rev. John M. Winn, Jr. and Rev. Carole Cotton-Winn were appointed to the Houma charge. They prepared for their sermons and took the worship hour seriously. They really opened up the church to the community.

Carole Cotton-Winn was born in Rayville, Louisiana. John grew up near New Orleans. Both of them received their theological education from Perkins School of Theology in Dallas. John has four children from his first marriage. One of these, his daughter Carol Susan Winn, became a Methodist minister.

Under the leadership of Jack McNamara, who had been a long-time director of the youth choir, the youth presented the musical "Alleluia." They would present an encore of the musical a couple of years later.

It was a busy year for our church in 1980. The Koinonia Circle, a ladies' group, began meeting in April, 1980. New pew Bibles were purchased and dedicated on July 27, 1980. Our "summer minister" was Ron Dauphin. The Senior High made a summer trip to Disneyworld, while the Junior High went to Panama City (Noah's Ark).

A clown ministry was begun under the leadership of the Junior High counselors, John and Carol Millwater. They were honored by the state in 1980. They later became involved in helping out the Special Olympics.

Our old organ had just about had it. An organ committee was formed, headed by Pat Porter. After deciding that a pipe organ was too expensive, they decided on an Allen Digital Computer Organ (cost about $25,000).

First Church of Houma held its first Ecumenical songfest in 1980 to a packed sanctuary. Choirs from the surrounding community were invited to join our own choir in a Sunday night presentation.

The pews were sent to be refinished in August of 1981. The refinishing company sent us chairs to use while the pews were being worked on. While the pews were out, new carpeting was laid and the sanctuary was painted. The pews were reinstalled by the end of October. Later, in 1982, the stained glass windows were repaired and covered with Lexan to protect them.

The new Bayou Blue United Methodist Church was consecrated on July 5, 1981. This church, which was formerly named Lagrange United Methodist Church, has moved to a different location and erected a sanctuary and educational building at the new site.

Some of the Senior High youth, led by Russell Elliott and our "summer minister" Keith, attended an Appalachian Service Project in 1982.

The end of 1982 brough us a mystery. A number of items began disappearing. It was discovered that someone had stolen a set of church keys. He was making himself at home in the church ... eating out of the kitchen, showering in the bathroom, stealing items to sell. He was living in an old car on the Pettigrew property next door. He was finally caught and the mystery was solved.

Many activities were planned for 1984, the 200th anniversary of Methodism in America. The biggest by far was Wesley Fest. It was a festival that offered food, crafts, and entertainment. Over 1,000 tickets were sold. The event was repeated as Wesley Fest II in 1985. It would be several years before the church would try another festival-type event.

Another member of the First United Methodist Church of Houma decided to enter the ministry at this time. Steve Porter graduated from Asbury and became an ordained minister in the United Methodist Church. He has served appointments in northern Louisiana.

Mrs. Pettigrew, who lived next door to the church, was not fond of the Methodists. The singing and chimes seemed to irritate her. In her later years, she moved off of the property to be cared for and the house was left in disrepair. When she passed away in the mid 1980's, Judge Pettigrew wanted to sell the property. Hartwell Lewis, Russell Elliott, and John Winn approached Judge Pettigrew. The judge wanted $490,000 for the property, though the land was appraised for only $230,000. The judge kept calling until one day when Hartwell Lewis offered him $250,000 ... if he accepted by nightfall. He did. The deal was closed by July 1, 1987.

The church was still unsure about taking such a big step. They were given until January 1, 1988 to make a decision. At a board meeting, Audrey Marcel stood and said that they should pray on this decision. Everyone stood up and held hands. This broke the ice and the decision was eventually approved. The church came up with the $100,000 by the deadline. It was something that the church really couldn't afford ... but they really couldn't afford not to. The immediate need for parking space was apparent. And the church may someday need the area for expansion. Mr. Lewis put in $23,000 on the parking lot. He sold the property to the church for $230,000 ... the appraised value.

The old Pettigrew house was torn down by the men of the church. While doing so, they found that there were some graves under the house. Evidently they had been buried their when the property was part of Crescent Plantation.

Rev. J. Henry Bowdon, Jr.

Rev. J. Henry Bowdon, Jr. was appointed to Houma in 1988. He had spent the previous five years in Lake Charles, where the Bowdons had bought a house. He was moved to Houma to take over where the Winns left off.

> Rev. Bowdon was born on April 21, 1927 in Jackson, Louisiana. His father was Dr. J. Henry Bowdon, Sr., a prominent Methodist minister in the Louisiana Conference. In 1950, he married Virginia Kirkland. They had three sons and one daughter. Rev. Bowdon began his ministry as an associate pastor in Lake Charles in 1952. Much of his ministry was spent in southern and central Louisiana.
>
> Rev. Bowdon was known for his building projects at many of his pastorates. He was very active in the Boy Scouts. He received the Eagle Rank while at the Lake Charles church. He served in a number of positions on various boards in the conference. He has also served on many community associations where he was serving.

In 1988, a group of church members traveled to a church growth seminar at Fraser Methodist Church in Montgomery, Alabama. This was the beginning of a number of changes. In September 1989, the service schedule was changed for the first time in over 30 years. Instead of having Sunday School in between the two morning services, classes would be held at the same time as worship services with a fellowship time in between. Reasons for this move included increasing attendance and increasing space for Sunday School classes. A Children's Church was also begun in the Activity Center. An upstairs area was enclosed to form a room to hold services. Also, a church library was reestablished in the Activities Building.

During Rev. Bowdon's time here, two men decided to enter the ministry. Jim Lowe (who moved to Tennessee) and Walter Parker (who moved to Texas) began attending seminary and preaching.

In January 1992, Rev. Bowdon surprised the congregation by announcing that he was going to retire. He would have liked to preach for a while longer, but he grew weary of the conflicts involved in this pastorate. He "retired" to Lake Charles, where he has two new jobs keeping him occupied.

Dr. Alan Dee Einsel

Dr. Alan Dee Einsel came to Houma in 1992. He was quite familiar with the church. In 1969, he married Barbara Cain (Jerome and Elsie Cain's daughter) in the Houma church. He had met her while they were both attending the Saint Paul School of Theology in Kansas City. Originally from Kansas, Rev. Einsel transferred to the Louisiana Conference in 1976.

> Rev. Einsel was born on February 5, 1939. After getting his Bachelor's degree in business, he joined the Navy. Then he met his future wife, Barbara, while attending Saint Paul Seminary. Barbara would later become a Diaconal Minister of Education. Rev. Einsel later received a Doctor of Ministry degree from Drew University. They were married in 1969 at the First United Methodist Church of Houma. The Einsels have two children, David and Sandy.

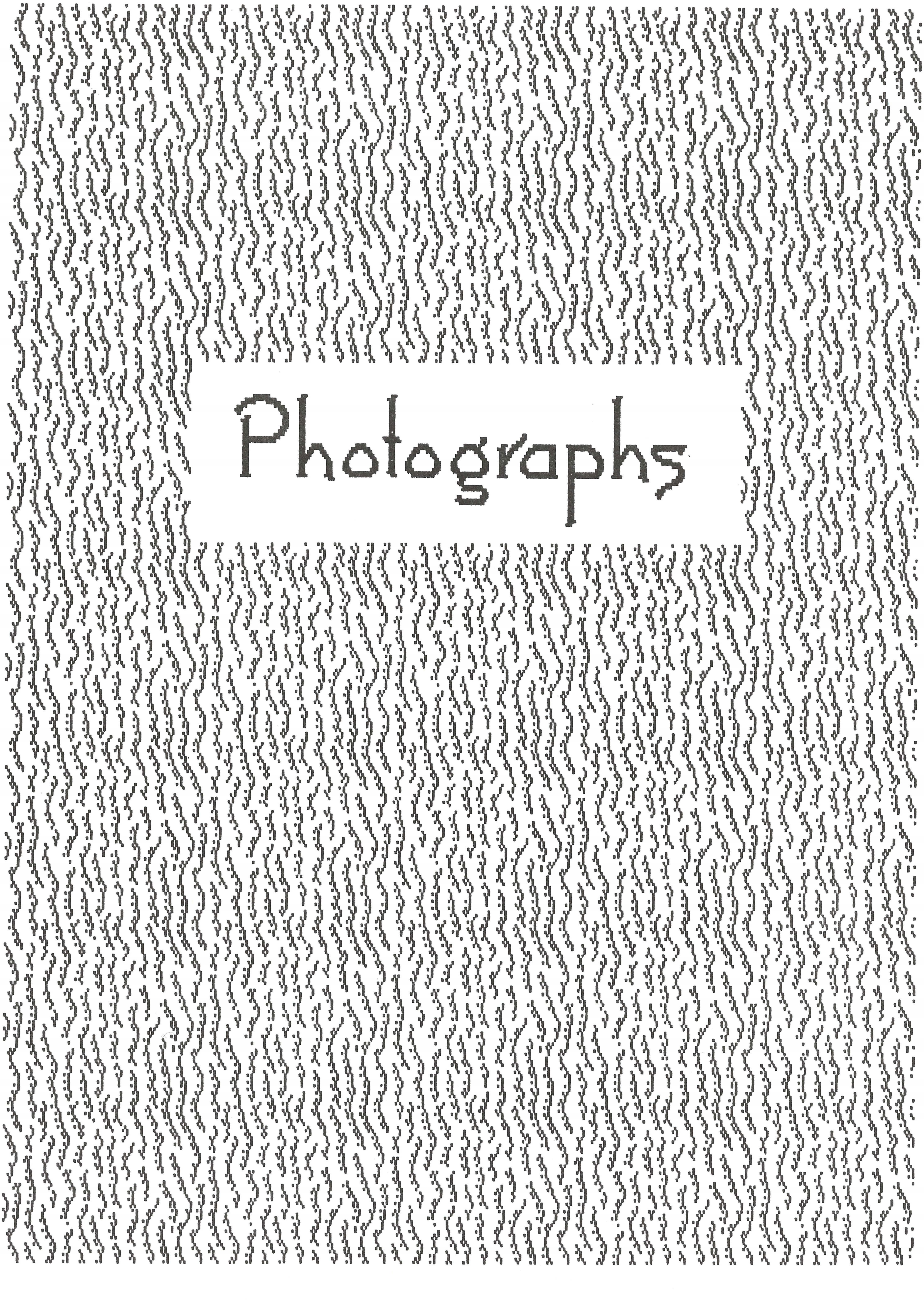
Barbara Einsel came to the church not only as the preacher's wife, but also as the Christian Education Director. She is a Diaconal minister in the Methodist Church. After talking about it for years, the church finally managed a way to hire an education director. The plans for the church in 1952 had one of the rooms labeled as the Christian Education Director's office. Over the years, the possibility of hiring one had been brought up several times. The goal was finally reached in 1992. Barbara is even using the same office labeled for the C.E.D. in the 1952 plans.

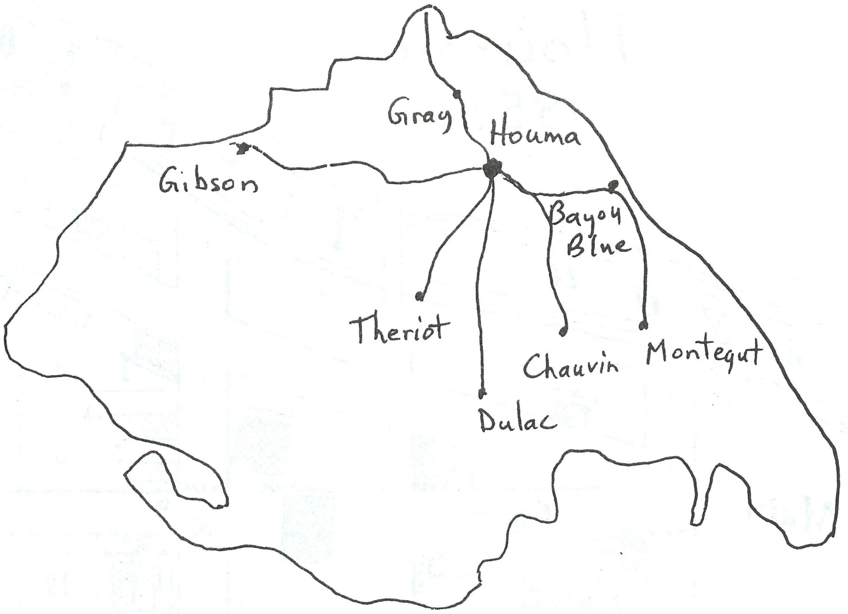
Since the change in the worship schedule, the attendance of the second service had been declining. The Evangelism committee brought this to the attention of the Worship committee. After an extensive study, it was determined that the schedule change had not accomplished its desired goals. When the congregation was surveyed, it was found that they preferred the "old" schedule. In October of 1992, the church returned to the schedule where the Sunday School took place between the worship services. Children's Church was retained, however, with some adjustments.

With the arrival of the Einsels came the first Festival Under the Oaks. Held in the fall, this annual event provides fun and fellowship for our church and the community. It involved games for the kids, musical entertainment, an art show, and plenty of food.

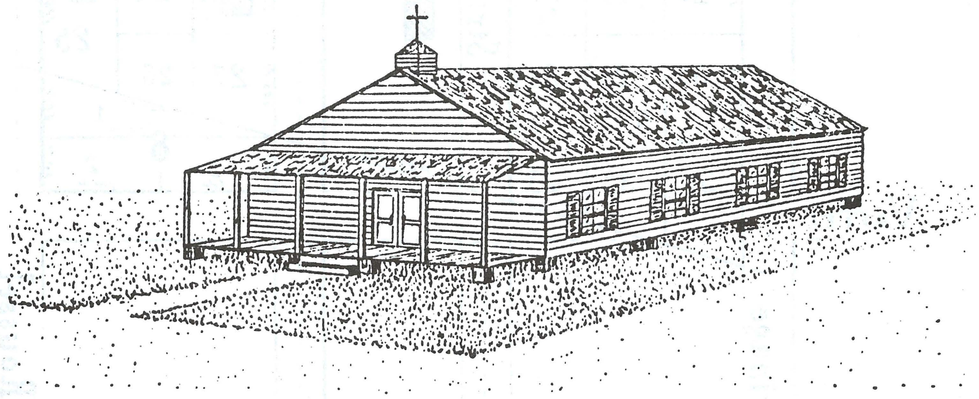
With the coming of the 150th anniversary of Methodism in our area, plans were made for a celebration. The bishop and former pastors were invited to a special celebration held on May 15, 1994. The history book was distributed and articles were placed in the newspaper. After 150 years, Methodism is alive and well in Houma and Terrebonne parish.

Photographs




Gray
Houma
Gibson
Bayou Blue
Theriot
Chauvin
Montegut
Dulac

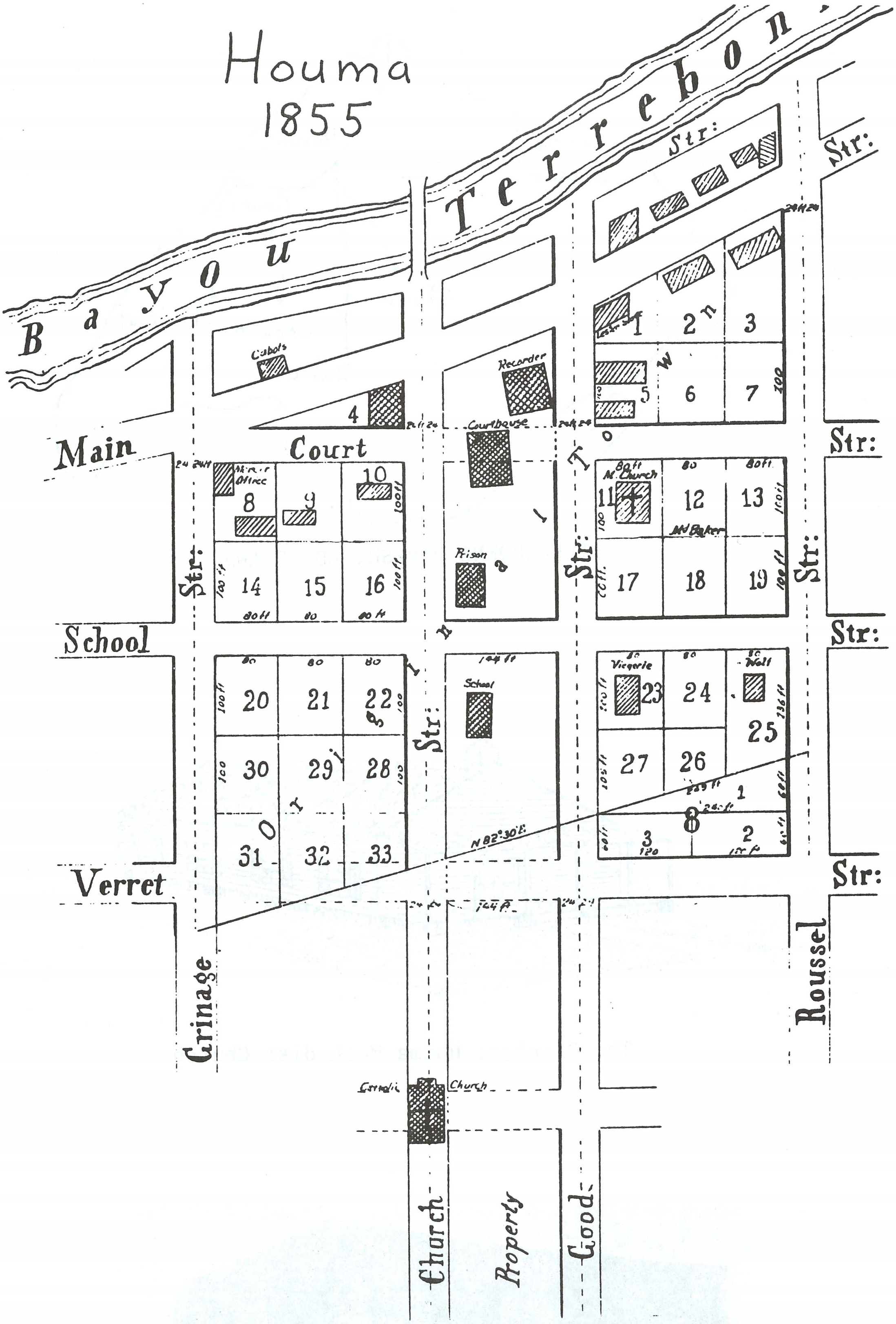
TERREBONNE PARISH, LOUISIANA



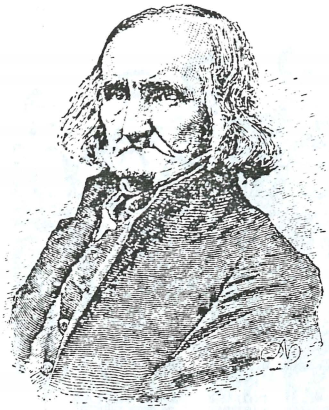
The Original Houma Methodist Church

R.J. Harp's Church Journal

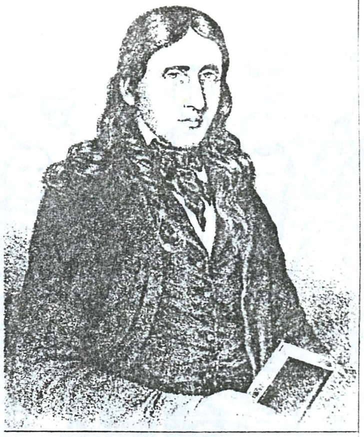
This is the only record written
of the Houma and Thibodaux area
from the 1800's.


Houma
1855
Bayou Terrebonne
Str:
Main
Court
Str:
School
Str:
Verret
Str:
Grinage
Str:
Str:
Church
Property
Good:
Roussel
Original Town
Cabots
Recorder
Courthouse
M. Church
Prison
School
Viegerie
Wolf
Catholic Church
N 82°30'E

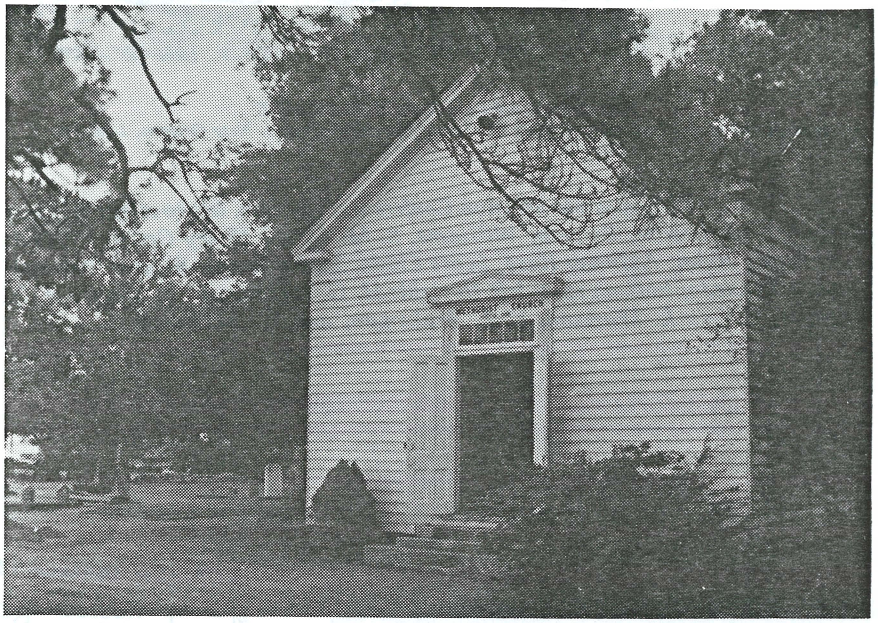
This 1855 map of Houma shows the Methodist Church on the corner of Court and Goode Streets. Built about 10 years earlier, it would occupy this corner until the property was sold in 1888.



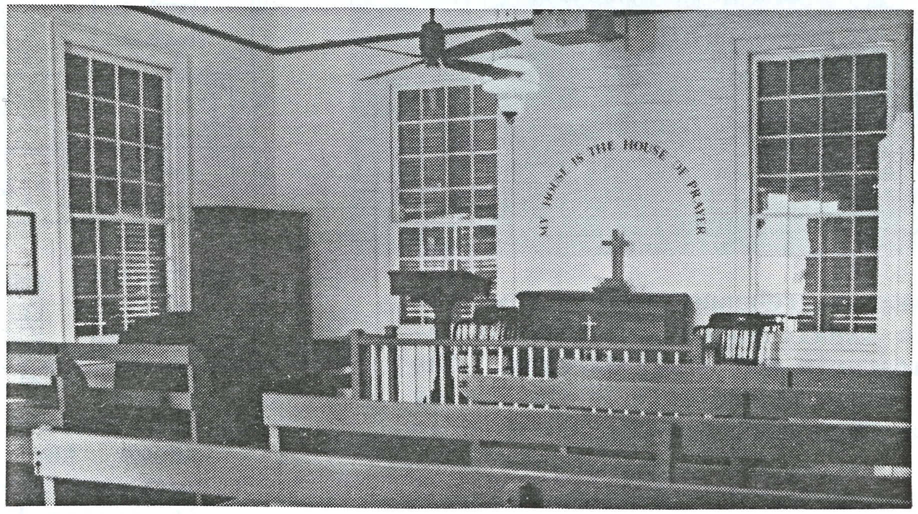
REV. ELISHA W. BOWMAN.



LORENZO DOW.

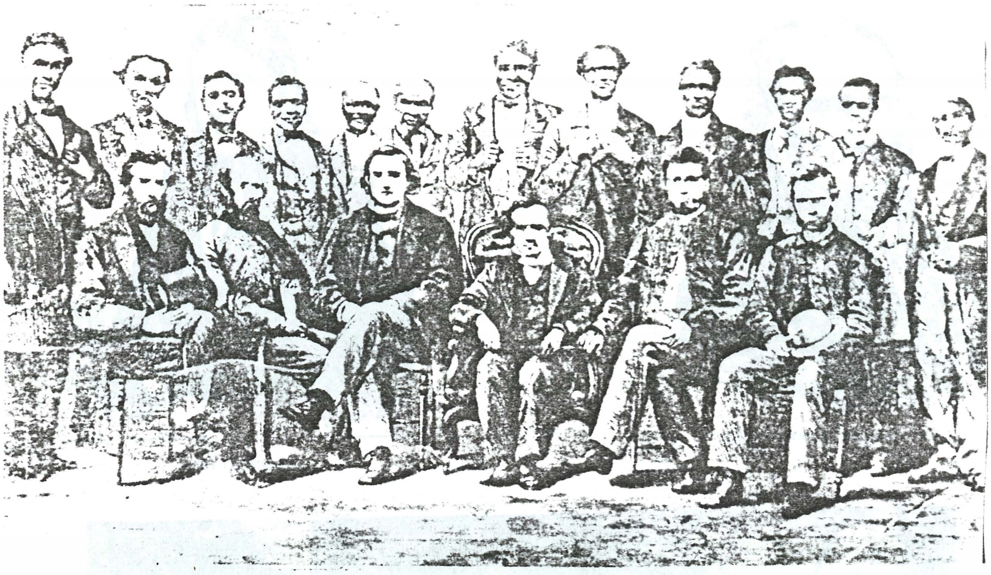


The church and cemetery at Gibson, La. Built in 1849, it is one of the oldest surviving Methodist churches in Louisiana.



MY HOUSE IS THE HOUSE OF PRAYER

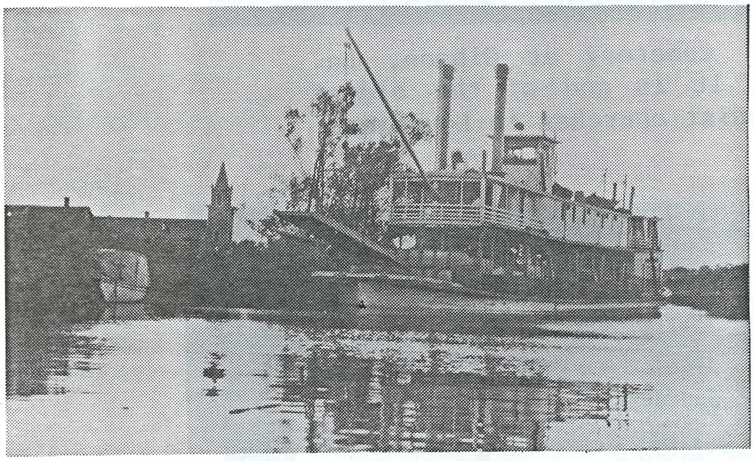
Interior of the Gibson Church



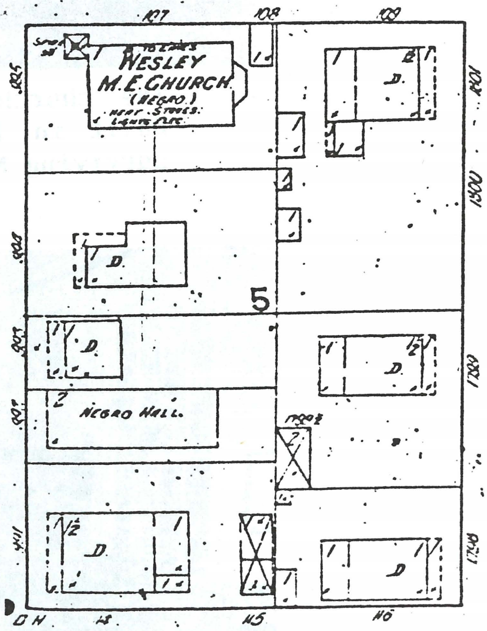
Courtesy Dillard University

THE MISSISSIPPI MISSION CONFERENCE
Organized Christmas Day 1865, Wesley Methodist Episcopal Church, New Orleans, Louisiana

Mississippi Mission Conference: top row, left to right: William Murrell, J. M. Bryant, Emperor Williams, S. M. Small, Henry Green, J. Goodwyn, Hardy Ryan, Anthony Ross, Scott Chinn, David Ennis, Samuel Osborne, Thomas Kennedy; bottom row, left to right: H. G. Jackson, R. K. Diossy, J. P. Newman, Bishop E. Thomson, N. L. Brakeman, and W. M. Henry.



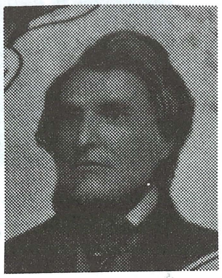
The steamer Terrebonne travels down the Barataria Canal, which was located between Barataria and Canal Streets. The church steeple at the left is the Wesley Methodist Church that was torn down in 1969.

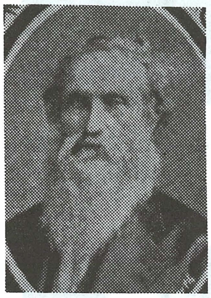

107
108
109
WESLEY
M.E.CHURCH
(NEGRO.)
HEAT: STOVES.
LIGHTS: ELEC.
D.
5
NEGRO HALL.
1800
1801
1789
1749
145
146

This section of map shows the Wesley Methodist Church as it appeared in the early 1900's.

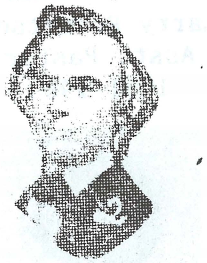
18th CENTURY PASTORS
who served in this area

Philo M. Goodwyn
1843, 1867-68


Stephen J. Davies
1844


Philip Dieffenworth
1846

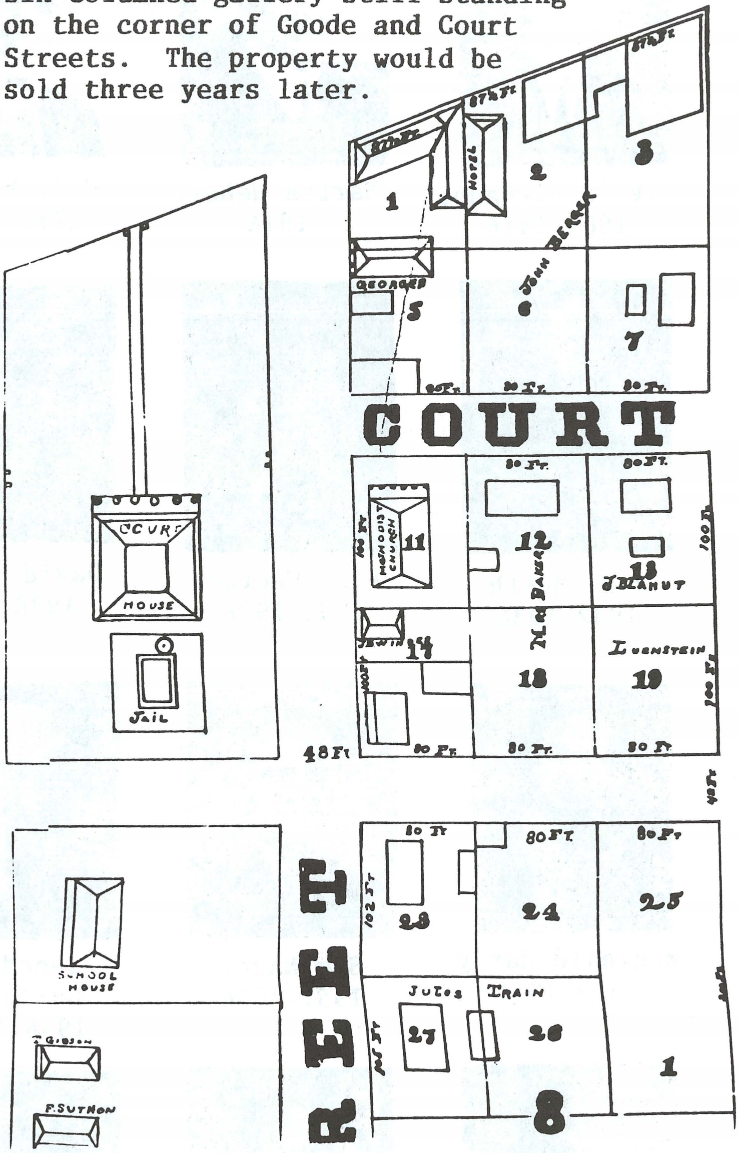
Lewis A. Reed
1849-56, 1876-78

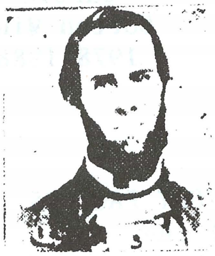

Robert J. Harp
1852-54

Jeptha Landrum
1857

1885 MAP of HOUMA

You can see the Houma church with its six-columned gallery still standing on the corner of Goode and Court Streets. The property would be sold three years later.

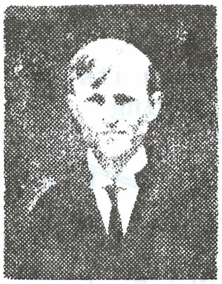

87½ Ft
87½ Ft
87½ Ft
HOTEL
1
2
3
JOHN BERGER
GEORGES
5
6
7
80 Ft
80 Ft
80 Ft
COURT
80 Ft
80 Ft
COURT
HOUSE
JAIL
100 Ft
METHODIST CHURCH
11
12
13
MAC BANAK
J BLANUT
100 Ft
JEWIN
14
LOWENSTEIN
18
19
100 Ft
48 Ft
80 Ft
80 Ft
80 Ft
40 Ft
80 Ft
80 Ft
80 Ft
SCHOOL HOUSE
102 Ft
23
24
25
JULES
TRAIN
T. GIBSON
F. SUTHON
27
26
1
REET
8


R.R.R. Alexander
1862-63

James L. Wright
1870

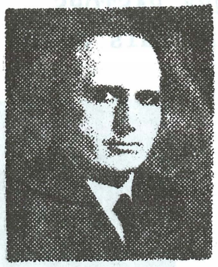
Joshua Scurlock
1884-85

James M. Henry
1889


C.V. Breithaupt
1909-1916

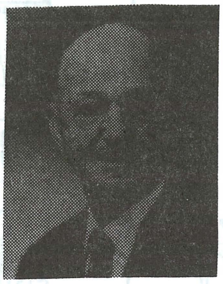
Martin Hebert
1916

G.A. Morgan
1916-1917


F.J. McCoy
1917-1927

B.H. Andrews
1927-1932

J.W. Booth
1932-1936


A.D. George
1936-1938

David Tarver
1938-1941

E.B. Chaney
1941-1943

Albert Hurley
1943-1949

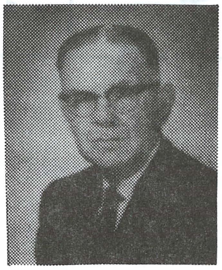
Reginald Hardy
1949-1951

Sam Nader
1951-1956

Benedict
Galloway
1956-1960

Henry Rickey
1960-1964

Larry Robertson
Asst. Pastor
1961-1963


Luman Douglas
1963-1966

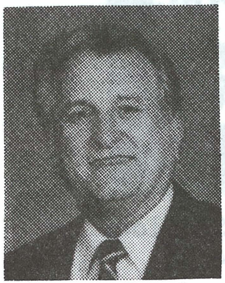
Donald Autrey
Asst. Pastor
1963-1964

Jerome Cain
1966-1976

Hugh Baker
1976-1978

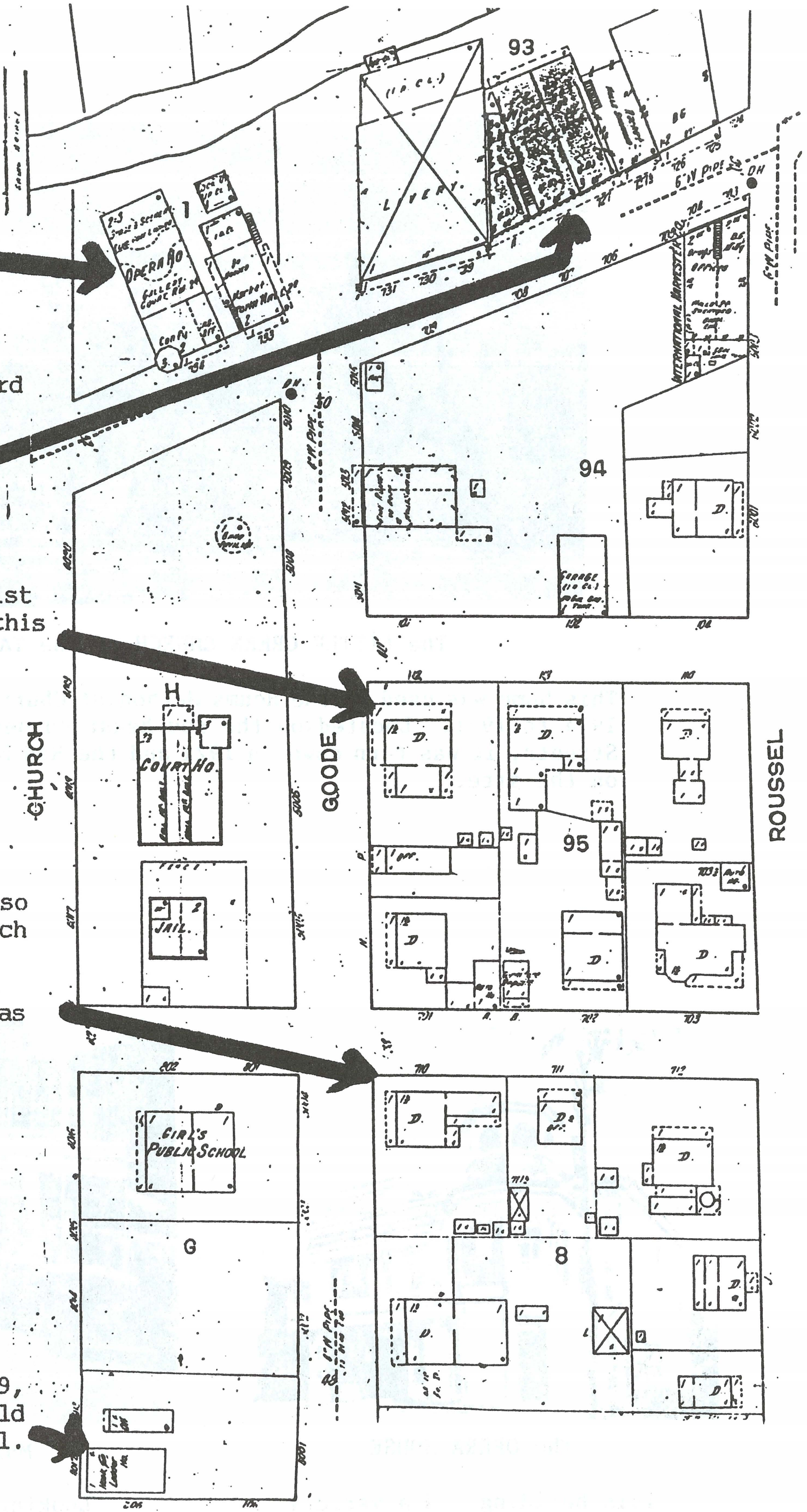
Carole
Cotton-Winn
1978-1988

John Winn
1978-1988


Henry Bowdon
1988-1992

Alan Einsel
1992-present

20th CENTURY PASTORS of the First United Methodist Church of Houma, Louisiana


93
LIVERY
OPERA HO
GALLERY
94
INTERNATIONAL HARVESTER
GARAGE
H
COURT HO
JAIL
CHURCH
GOODE
ROUSSEL
95
GIRL'S PUBLIC SCHOOL
G
8
D.

Some early services were held in the Opera House after they stopped using the Hook and Ladder Hall.

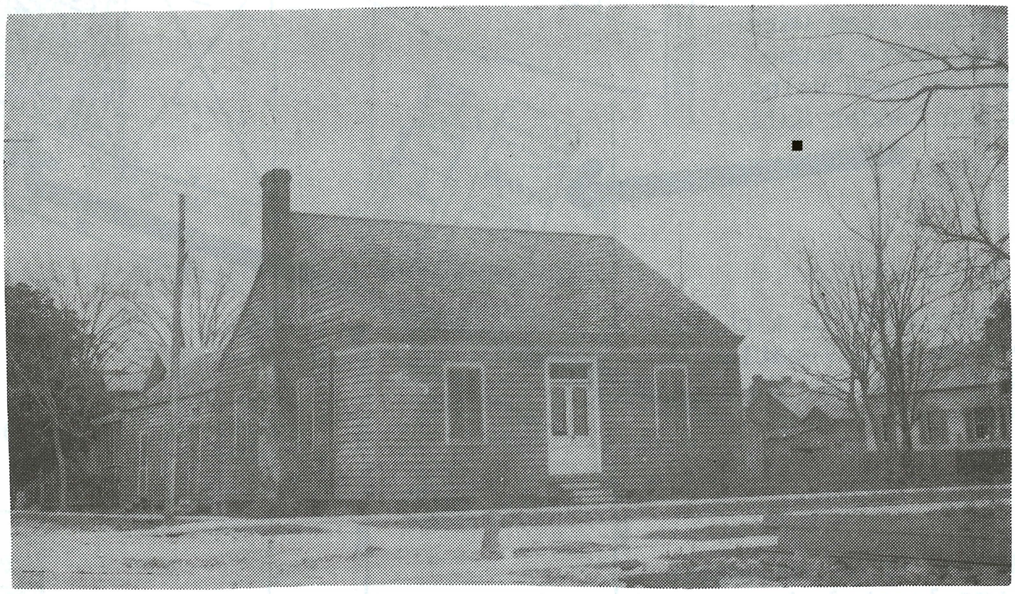
Services were held in a third floor room at this location on Main Street before the Masson House was bought.

The original Houma Methodist Church was located where this house stands.

This is the Masson House, also called the Little Green Church or the Tabernacle. It was bought in 1914 and used as a church until 1921, when it was torn down and the Red Brick Church was erected.

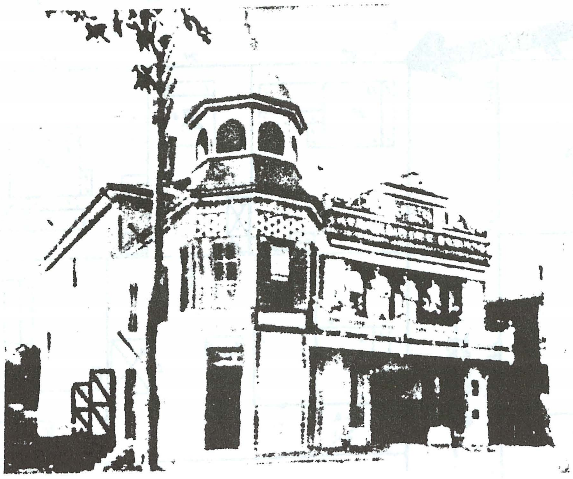
When the Houma Methodist Church was "reborn" in 1909, the first services were held in the Hook and Ladder Hall.

1907 MAP of HOUMA



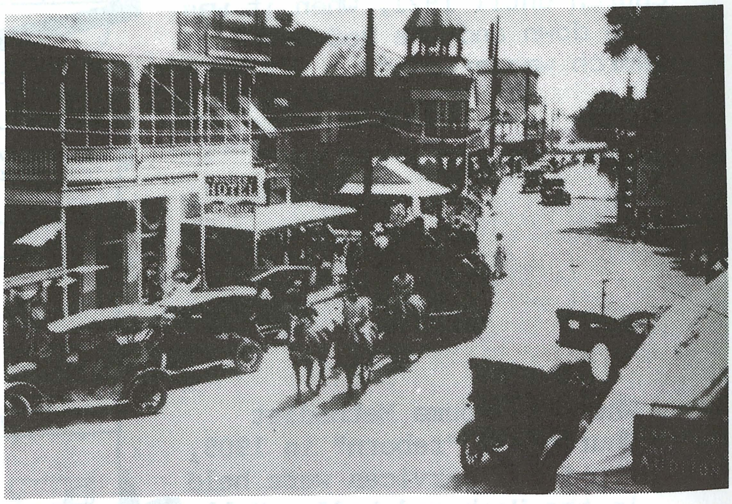
The LITTLE GREEN CHURCH or The TABERNACLE

This home was used as the Houma Methodist Church (Mission Hall) from 1914 to 1921. Located on the southeast corner of Goode and School Streets, it was torn down in 1921 and the Red Brick Church was built on the site.



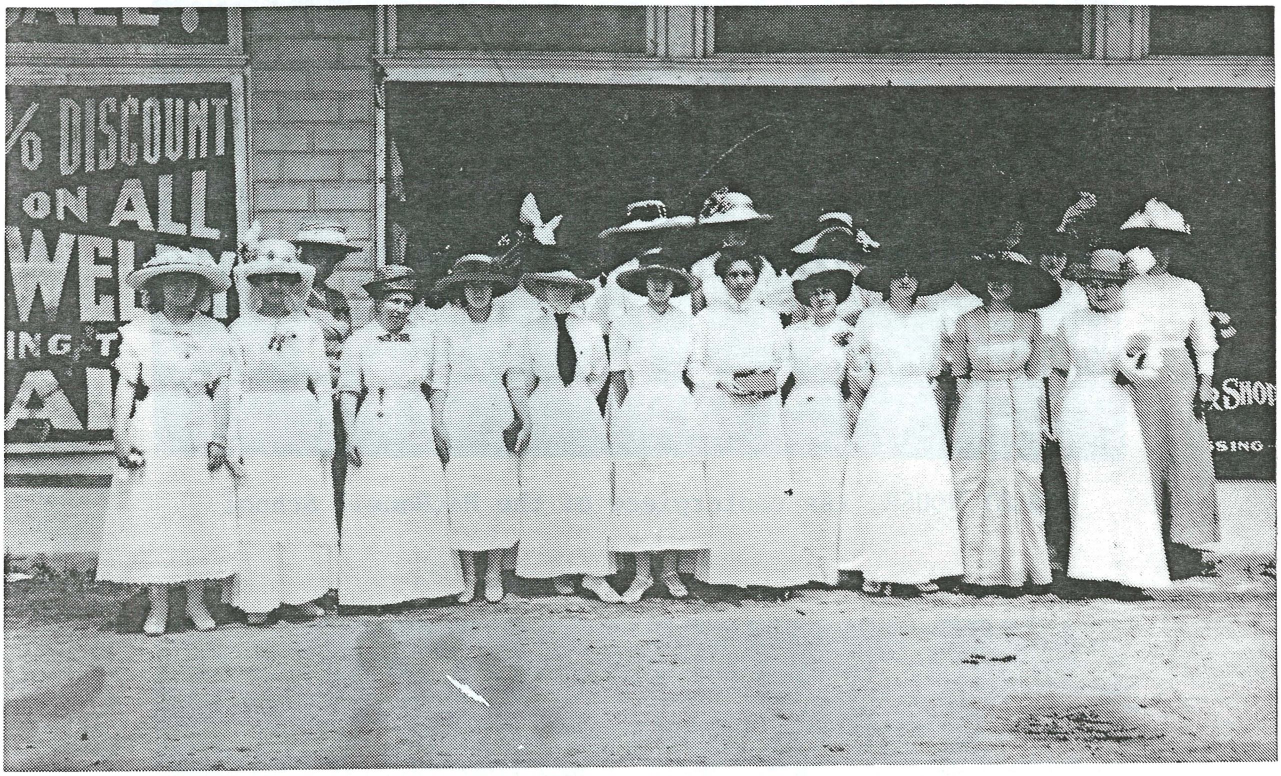
The OPERA HOUSE

This building had a variety of uses. It was used to hold Methodist worship services before 1914.

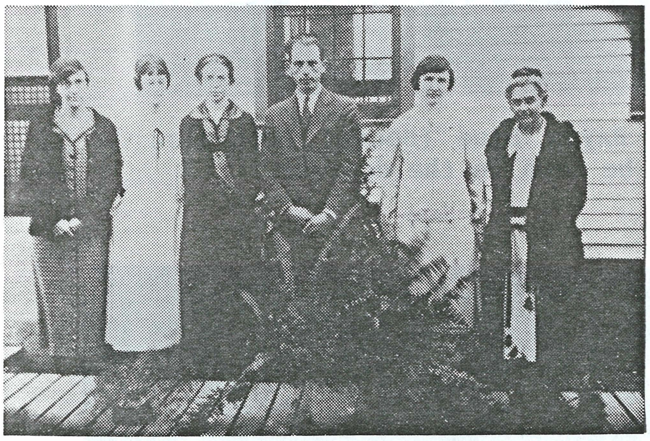


Mardi Gras in the 1920's

Looking eastward down Main Street, you can see the Opera House on the left. Services were also held further down the street.



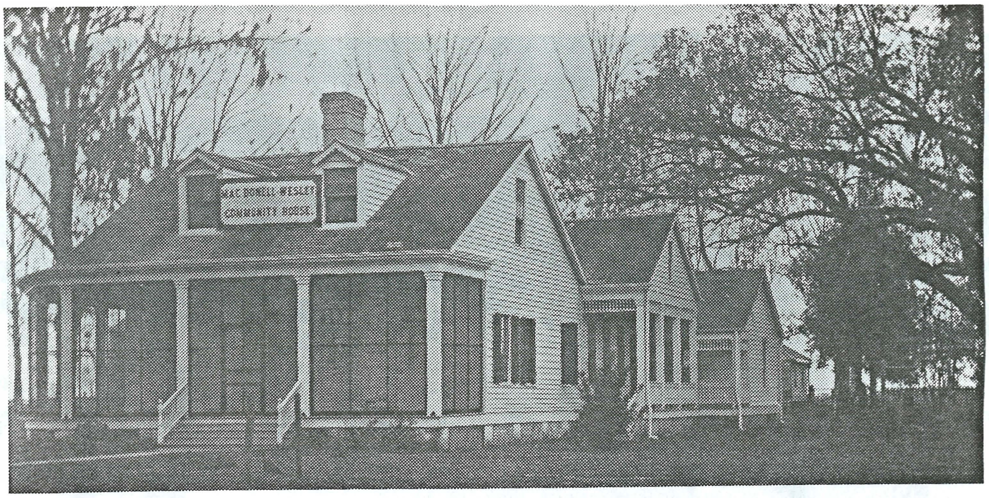
These women from the Houma Methodist Church can be seen standing on Houma's dirt-covered Main Street. They are standing in front of the building in which they held worship services at that time (1913).



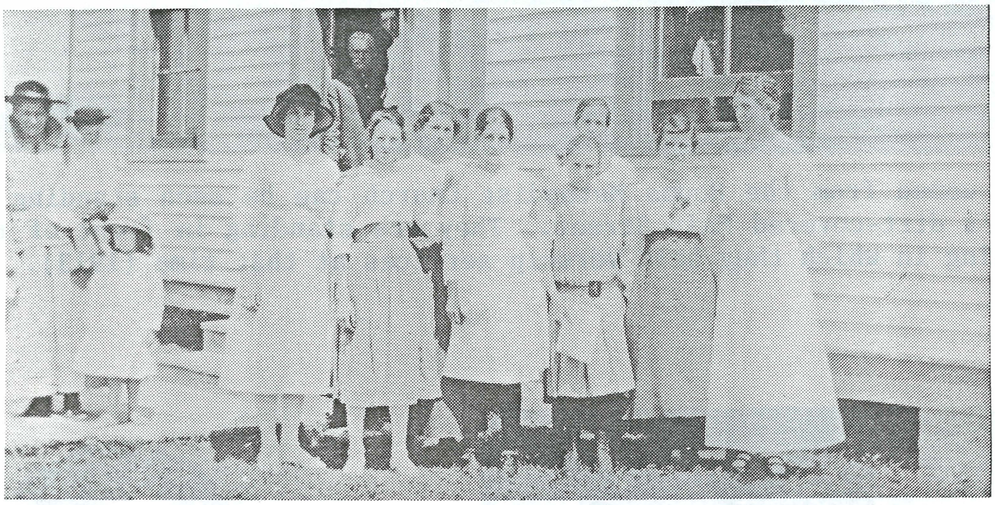
Leaders of the MacDonell School
in the 1920's.
Left to Right: Effie Fauver, Ione Gandy, Ella Hooper, Mr. Stout, Lois Hammett, Laura White

Miss Ella K. Hooper

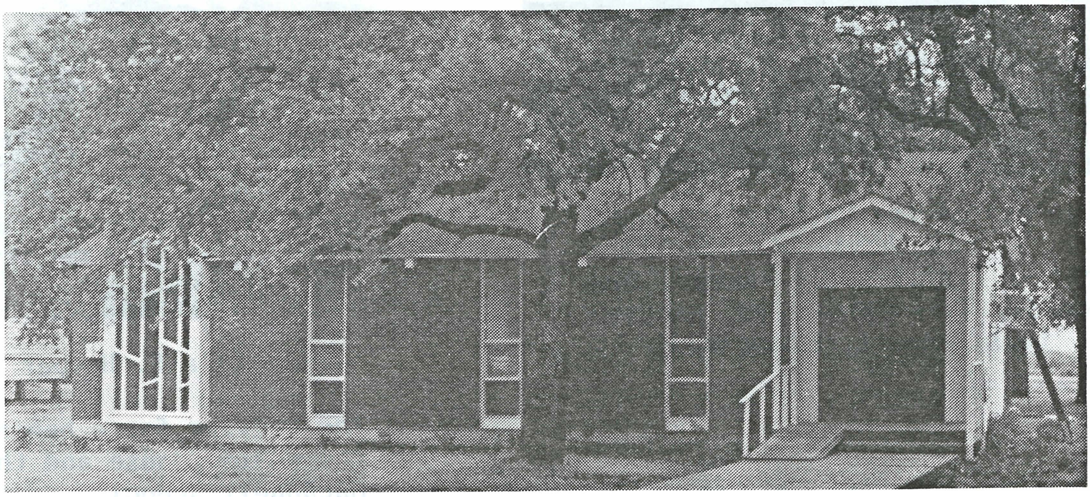
The driving force behind the Wesley House and the MacDonell School.


MAC DONELL-WESLEY
COMMUNITY HOUSE

WESLEY HOUSE, the centerpiece of the MacDonell School

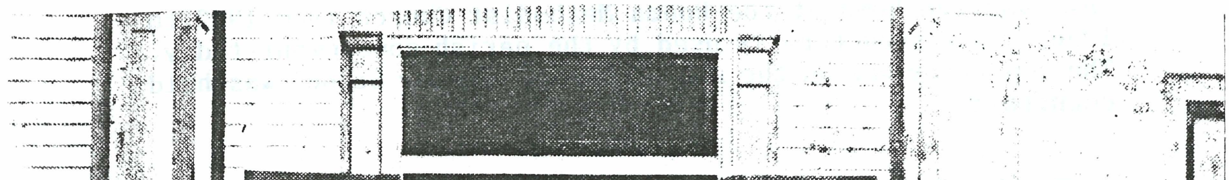


Teachers in training at the Bayou Blue (Bourg) Methodist Church. Rev. A.D. Martin can be seen in the doorway.



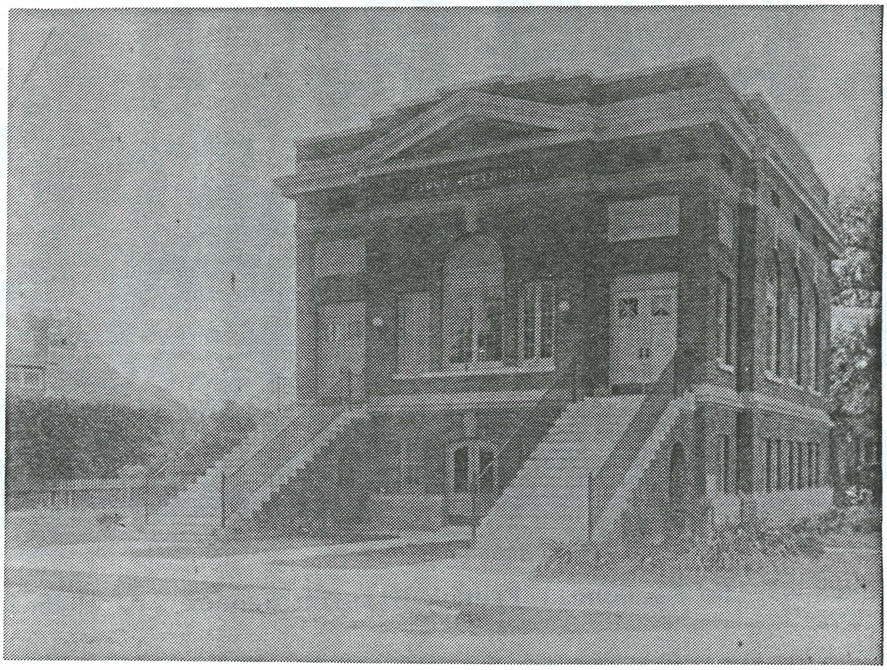
CLANTON CHAPEL ... Dulac, Louisiana

Students of the MacDonell French Mission School ... 1926-27



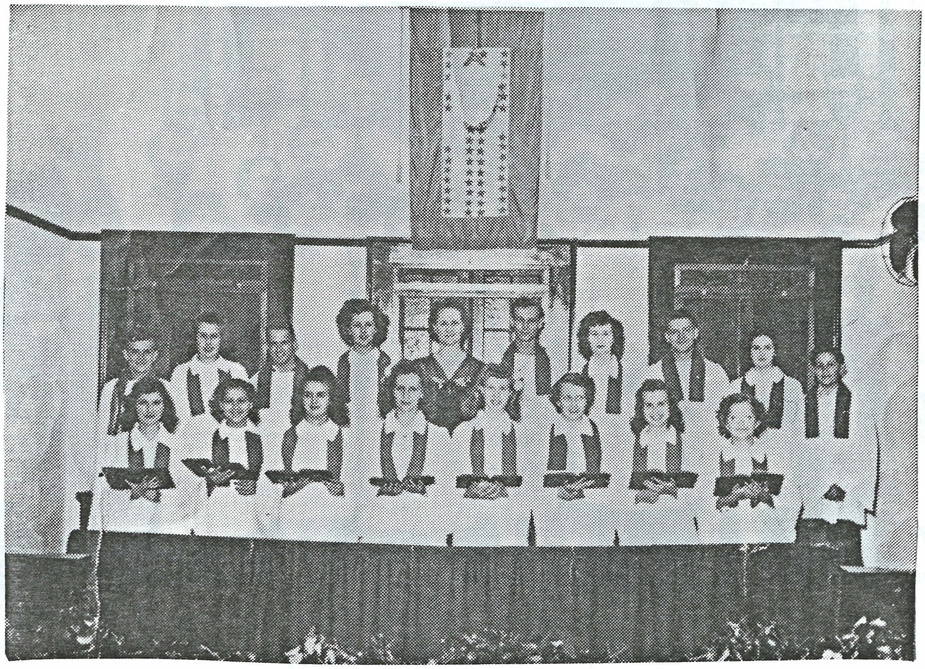
Gathering at MacDonell

Several prominent Methodist leaders in our area can be found in this picture. Miss Hooper and Rev. A.D. Martin are in the middle of the back row, Rev. McCoy is at the right (turned up collar, black tie), Rev. LaGrange is on the far right.



RED BRICK CHURCH

This was the home of the Houma Methodist Church from 1922 to 1956. This structure is used by the parish government today. The sanctuary was on the second floor. Sunday School was held downstairs.

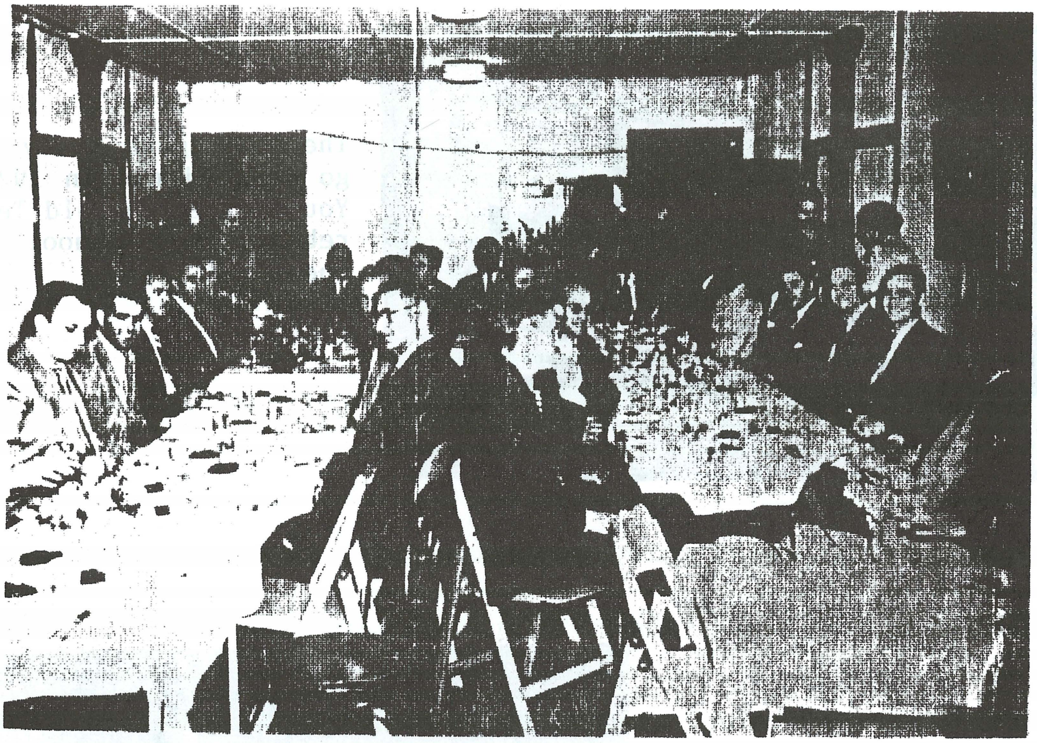


Here is the youth choir, led by Ruth Patterson, in the 1940's. The flag above them is the service flag, with each star representing someone from the congregation in the armed forces.

The gang gets ready to go on a picnic in 1925. You can see the old Terrebonne High School on the right.

The Epworth League goes on a cotton-picking party in 1925

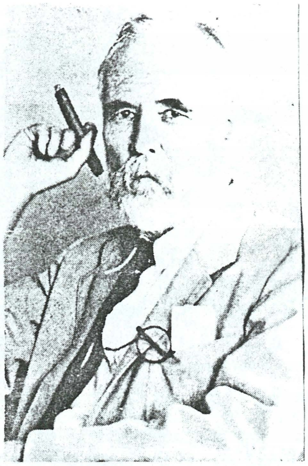
Even in 1925, the Methodists liked a good covered-dish meal.



METHODIST MEN - 1952

Ella Hooper (middle) and A.D. Martin (on her left) holding a meeting below Dulac in 1912.

C.P. Smith



Robert Butler

Joseph Pullen

J.H. Hunter

Ruth Patterson

C.R. Patterson

Dora Thatcher

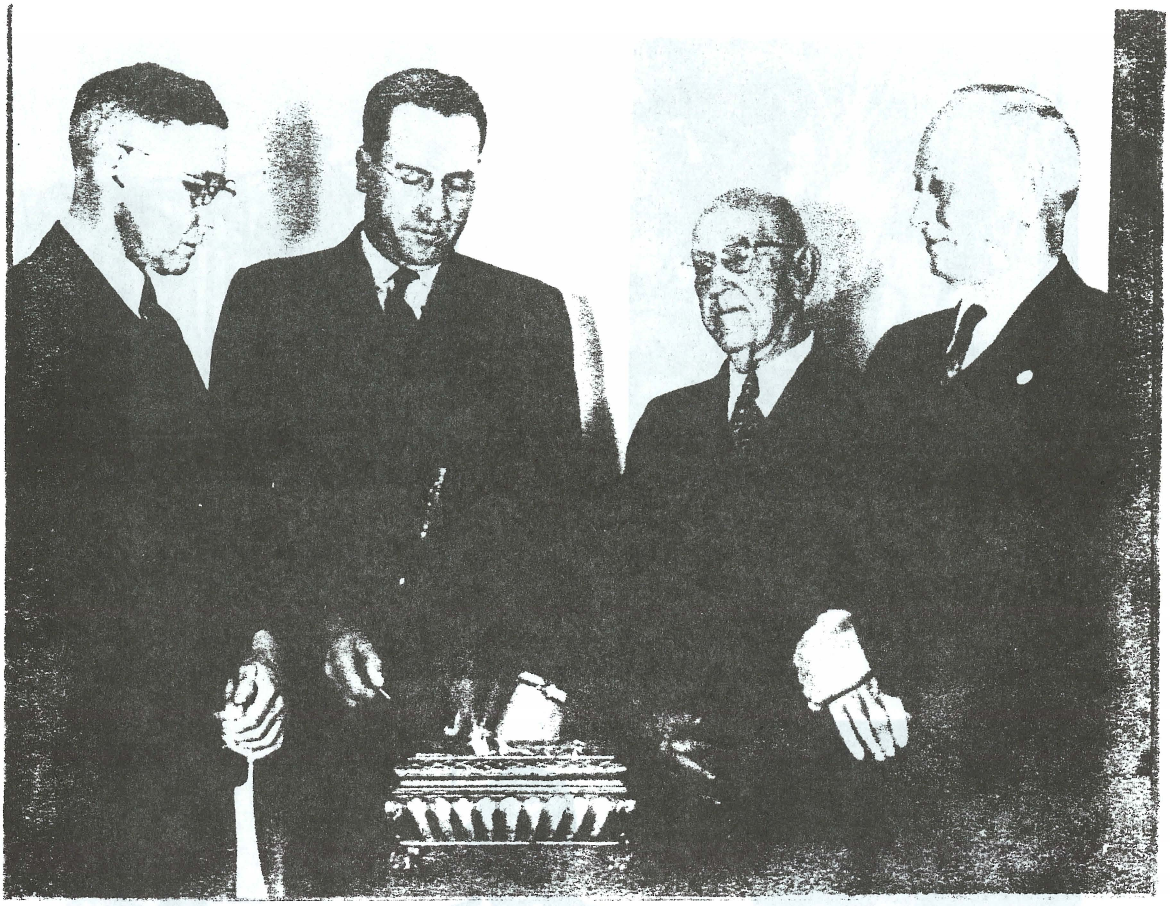
Some of the lay people
from our church.

Nettie Brunette

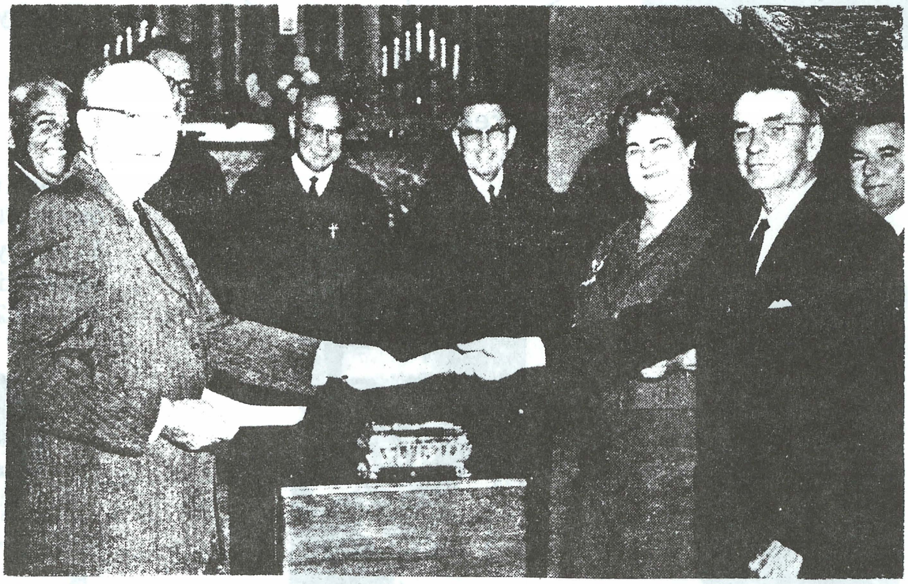
Thelma Ellender

Sunday School at the Red Brick Church

By the late 1940's, the Red Brick Church was busting at the seams.
A Quonset hut was placed next door to make room for more classes.



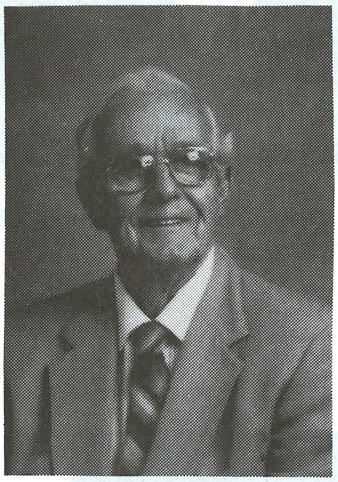
E.K. Bynum, C.R. Patterson, C.P. Smith, and J.H. Thatcher burn the mortgage note of the Red Brick Church on January 4, 1942.



At a dedication service in 1965, the mortgage for the "Cathedral on the Bayou" is burned. Left to right: Seymour Dalsheimer, M.L. Funderburk, Rev. Jerome Cain, Bishop Aubrey G. Walton, Rev. Luman Douglas, Ruth Patterson, Luther Kelly, and Edward Gaidry.

Rev. B.H. Andrews and his family relax at the MacDonell School

Clerville Thibodeaux ... one of the ministers to come out of the French Mission area.



Dr. B. Joseph Martin

Rev. Lionel Marcel

Rev. Ricky Hebert

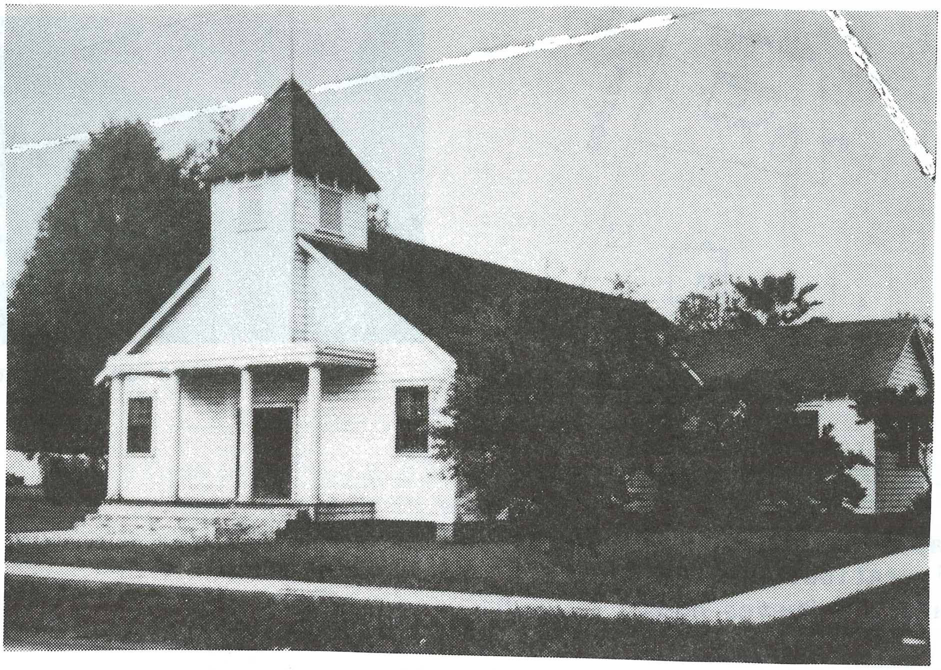
Some of the Methodist Pastors who came from our area.

Rev. Steven Porter

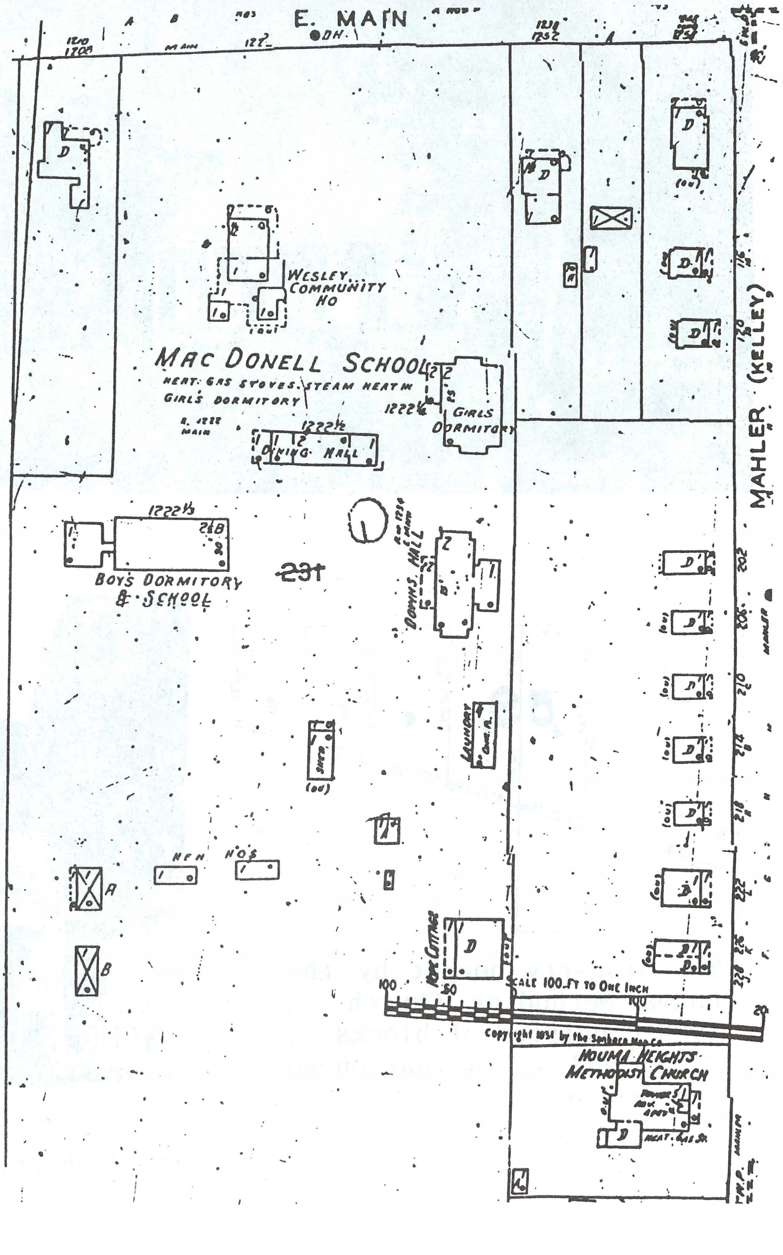
Rev. Walter Parker

After waiting for over 30 years, we finally got an Education Director in 1992

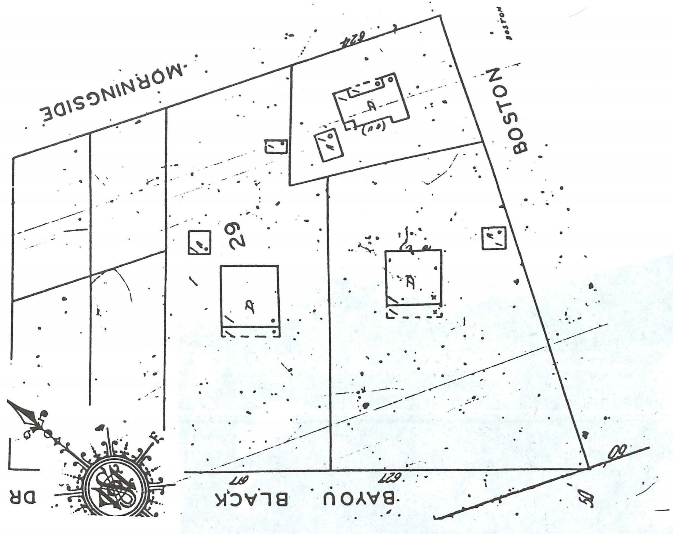
Barbara Cain
Educ. Director



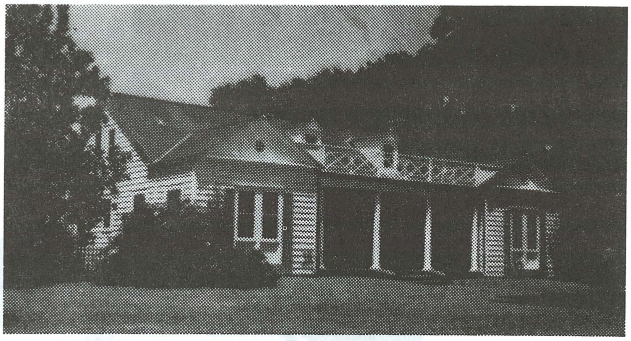
HOUMA HEIGHTS
METHODIST CHURCH


E. MAIN
DH.
MAIN
1210
1208
1222
1230
1252
WESLEY COMMUNITY HO
MAC DONELL SCHOOL
HEAT: GAS STOVES. STEAM HEAT IN GIRLS DORMITORY
E. 1222 MAIN
1222½
DINING HALL
1222½
GIRLS DORMITORY
1222½
BOYS DORMITORY & SCHOOL
231
DOWNS HALL
LAUNDRY
SHED
HEN HO'S
A
B
REC. COTTAGE
D
MAHLER (KELLEY)
202
206
210
214
218
222
226
228
SCALE 100 FT TO ONE INCH
100
50
100
Copyright 1931 by the Sanborn Map Co.
HOUMA HEIGHTS METHODIST CHURCH
HEAT: GAS ST.

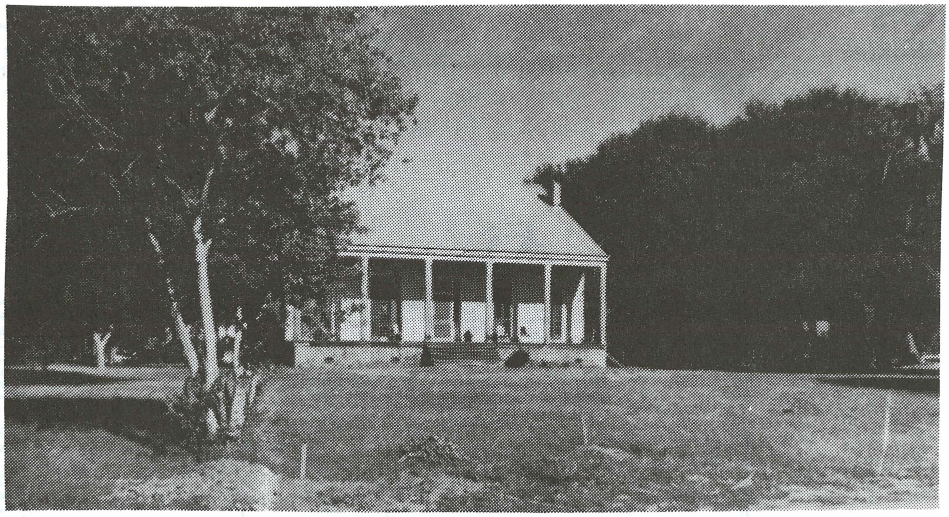
This map shows the layout of the MacDonell School and the Houma Heights Methodist Church in 1941.


MORNINGSIDE
BOSTON
29
BAYOU BLACK
DR

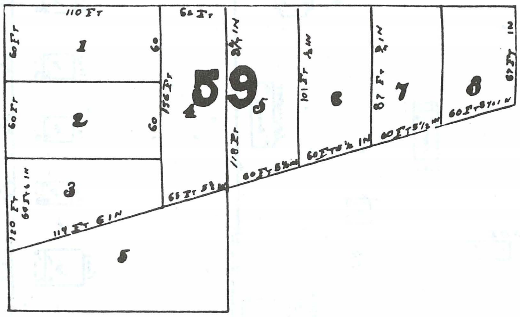
1941 map that shows the Crescent Plantation, the Pettigrew home, and the Reeves home.



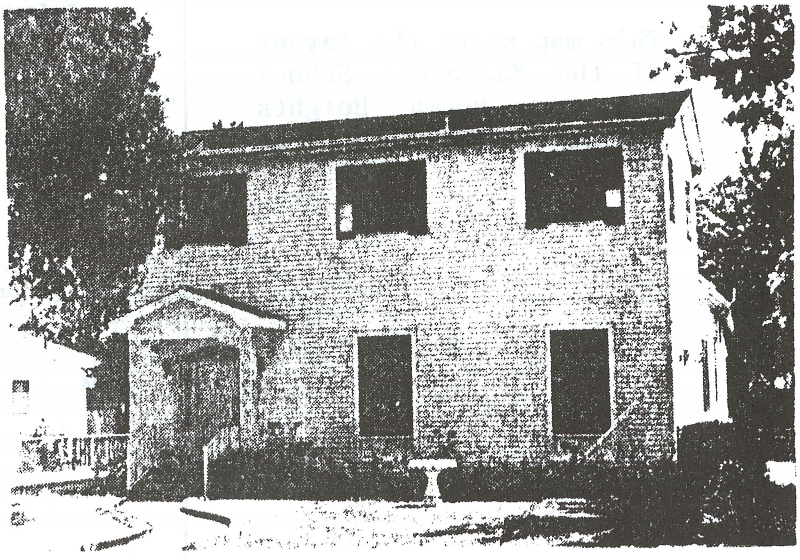
The parsonage on Morningside Dr.



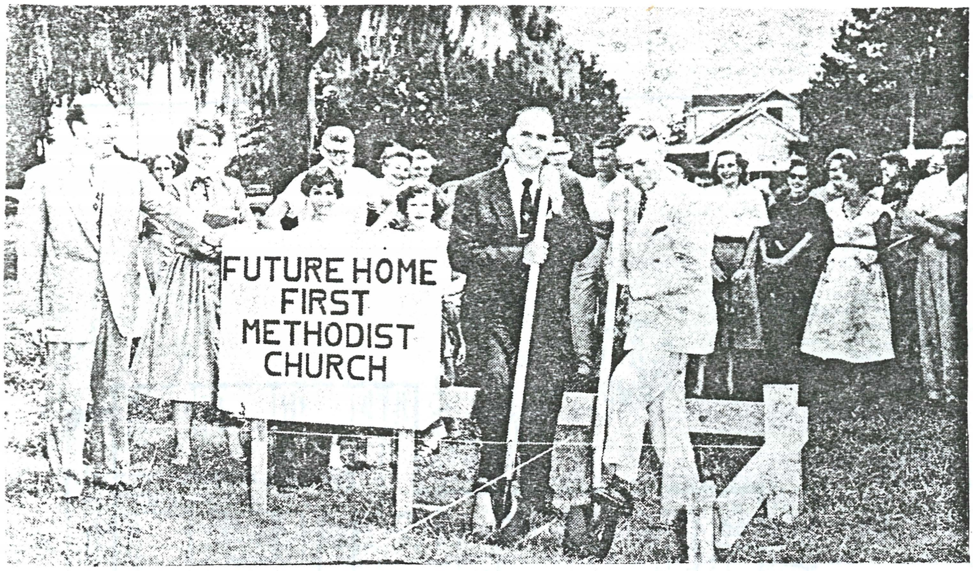
Crescent Plantation
Torn down so that the church could be built in 1956.


1
2
3
59
4
5
6
7
8
5

The property bought by the Houma Methodist Church in 1909 consisted of blocks 1, 2, 3, and 4. The parsonage was on lot 4.

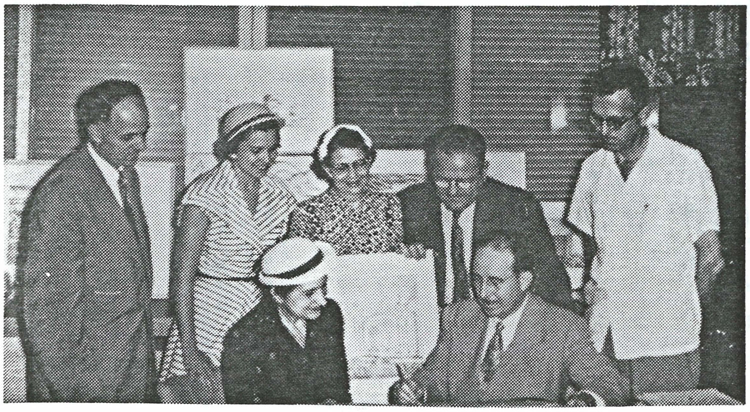


814 High St. -- Our parsonage for over 40 years

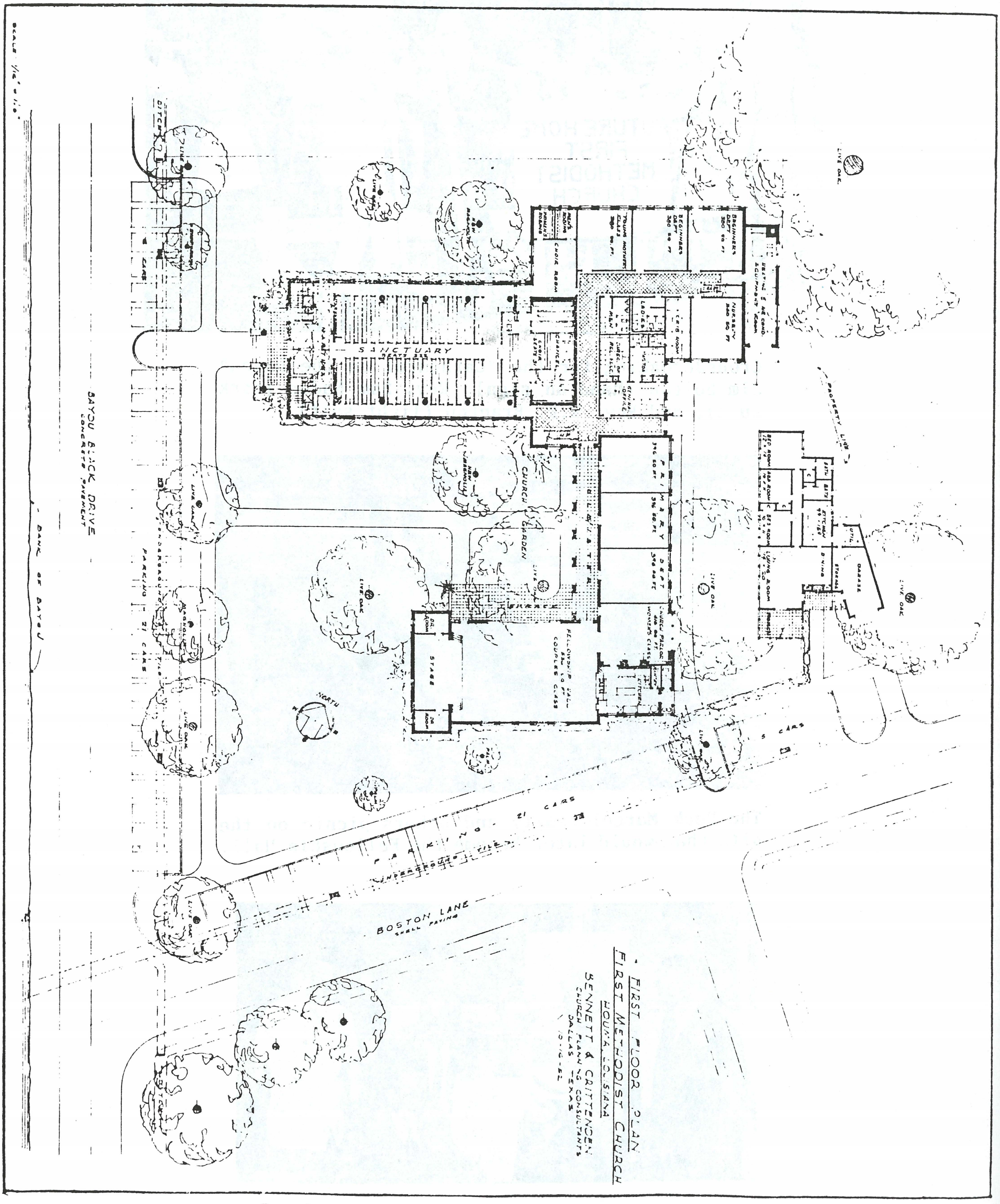

FUTURE HOME
FIRST
METHODIST
CHURCH

Groundbreaking for the "Cathedral on the Bayou" Jim Bolton (hand on sign), Rev. Sam Nader (dark suit), and Rev. R.R. Branton (light suit).

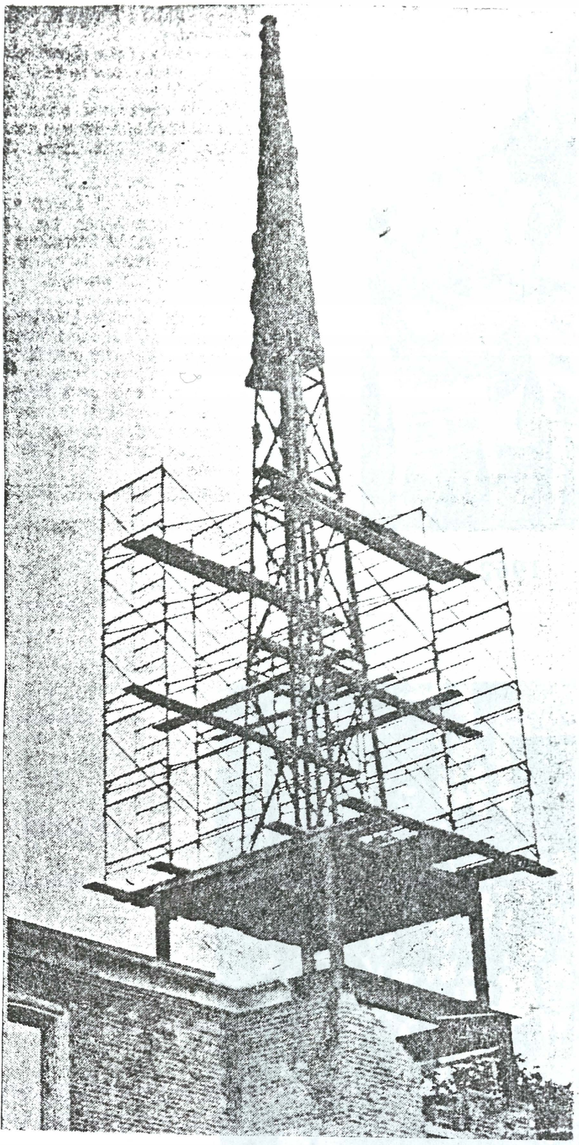
The Duck Marcel family and others picnic on the site that would later become the Fellowship Hall.



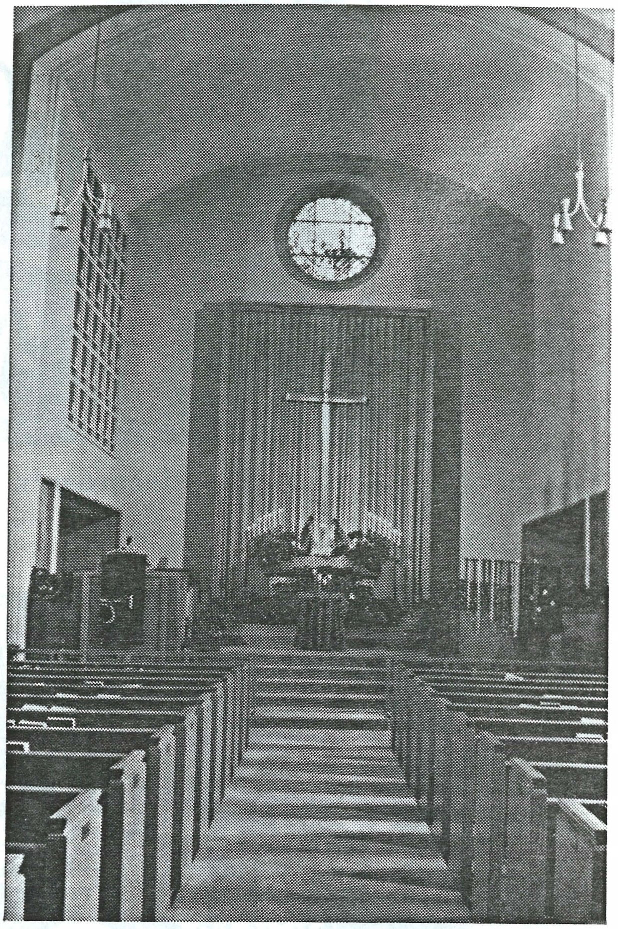
Members of the building committee look over plans for the new church with the architect.


FIRST FLOOR PLAN
FIRST METHODIST CHURCH
HOUMA, LOUISIANA
BENNETT & CRITTENDEN
CHURCH PLANNING CONSULTANTS
DALLAS TEXAS
BAYOU BLACK DRIVE
CONCRETE PAVEMENT
BANK OF BAYOU
BOSTON LANE
SHELL PAVING
SANCTUARY
CHURCH GARDEN
CHOIR ROOM
BEGINNERS
NURSERY
PRIMARY
FELLOWSHIP HALL
STAGE
KITCHEN
LIVE OAK
PARKING
NORTH
PROPERTY LINE
GARAGE
LIVING ROOM
DINING
KITCHEN
BED ROOM
5 CARS
21 CARS

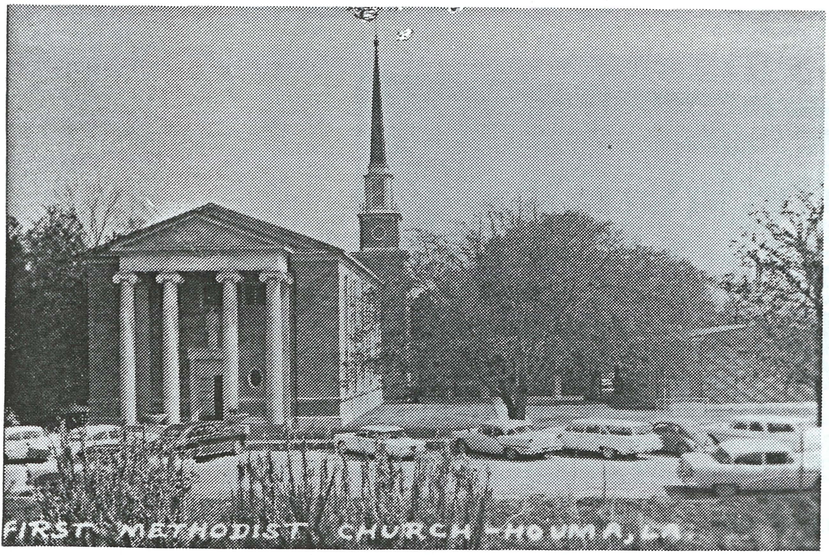
An early sketch of the blueprint for the new church. Though most of it is the same, see if you can find out what was changed.



The church steeple being completed in 1955. It stands 107 feet tall.



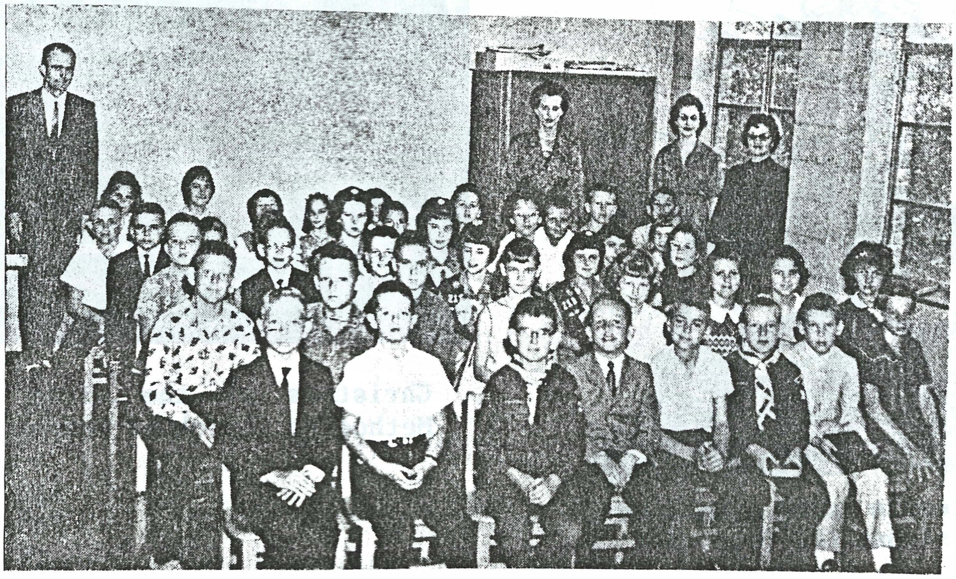
Christmas at the First United Methodist Church of Houma, La.



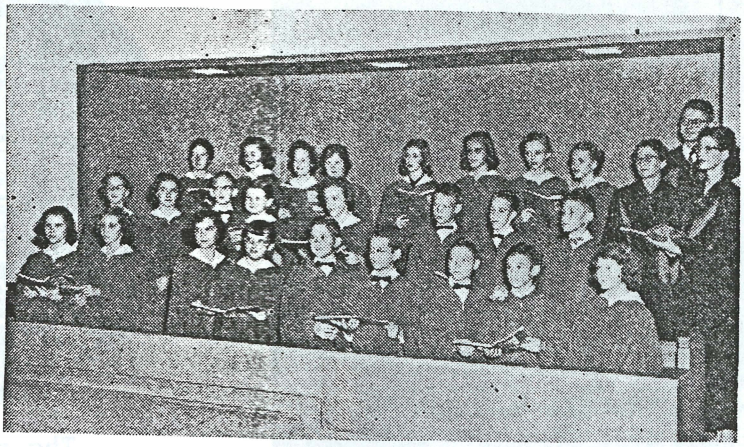
FIRST METHODIST CHURCH-HOUMA, LA.

The rose window in the sanctuary

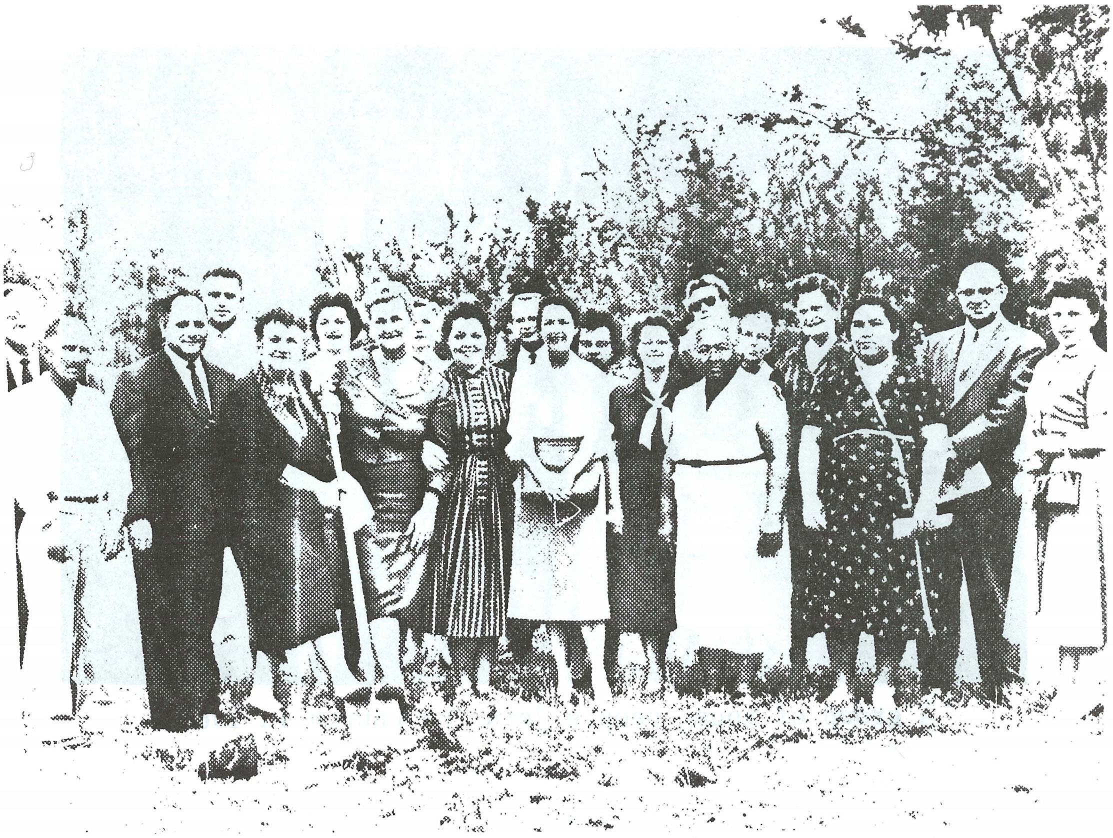
The Fishermen's Club ... 1962



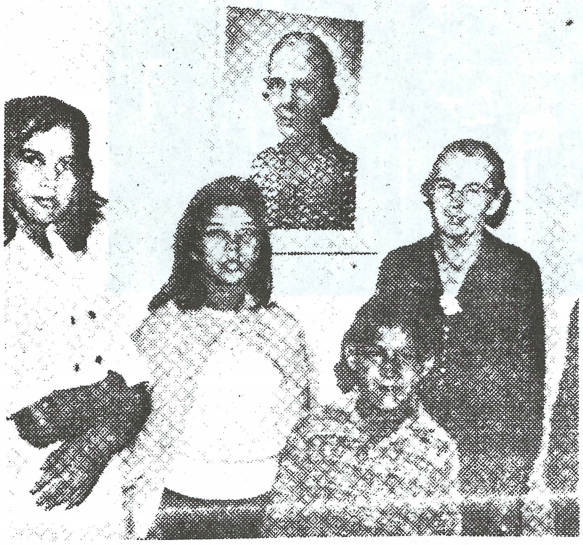
Junior Class ... 1962



Youth Choir ... 1963

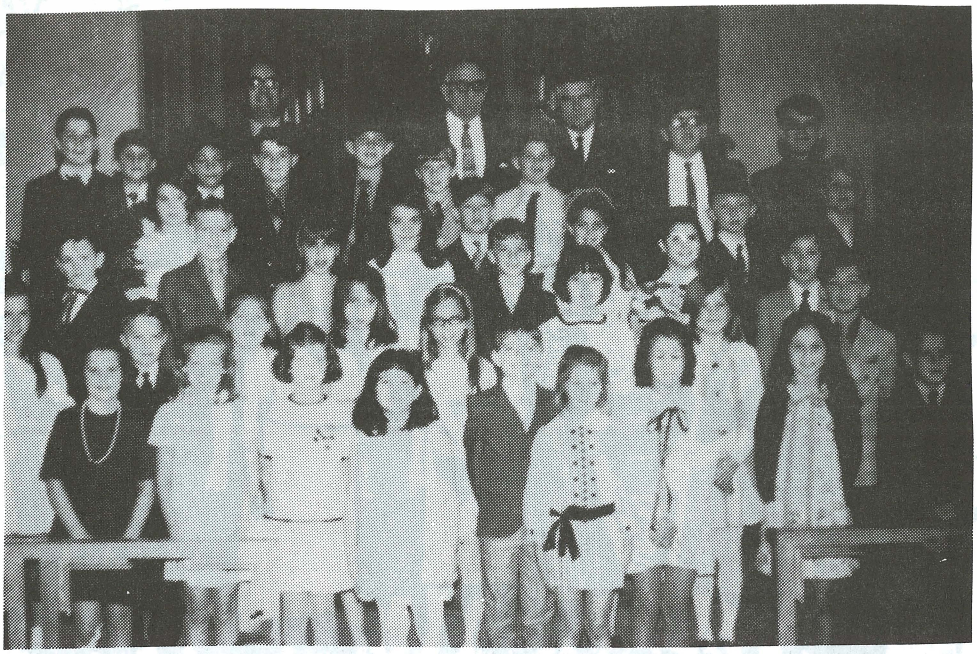


Breaking ground for the Dulac Community Center. Holding the shovel is Nettie Brunette. Next to her is Rev. Galloway and Ruth Patterson.

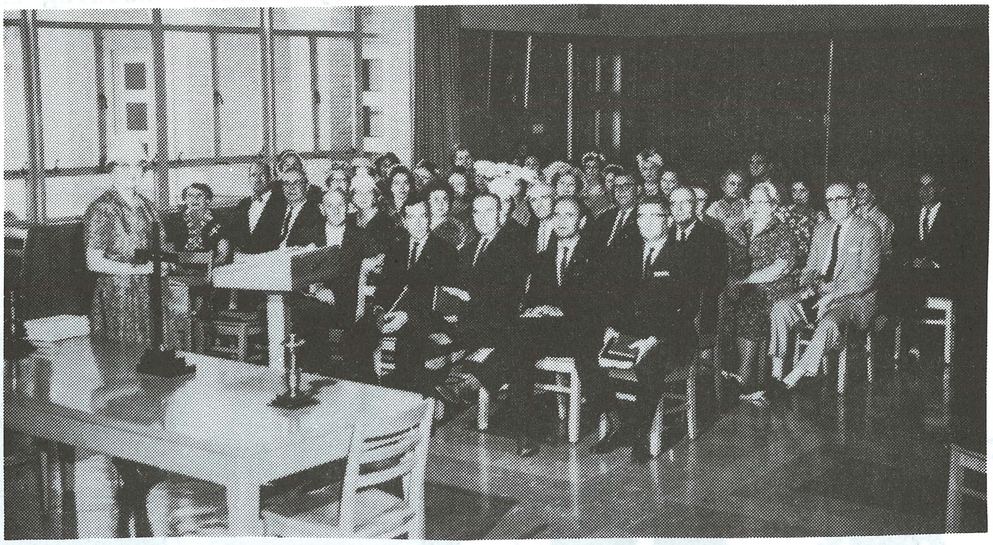


Miss Wilhemina Hooper with some of the Dulac Indian children.

Bishop Walton, Ricky Hebert, Rev. Jerome Cain, Dr. B. Joseph Martin, and Rev. Luman Douglas in the mid-1960's



A group of young people join the church in 1969.



The Patterson Class in the 1960's

SUMMIT
PIKES PEAK
14,110 FT.

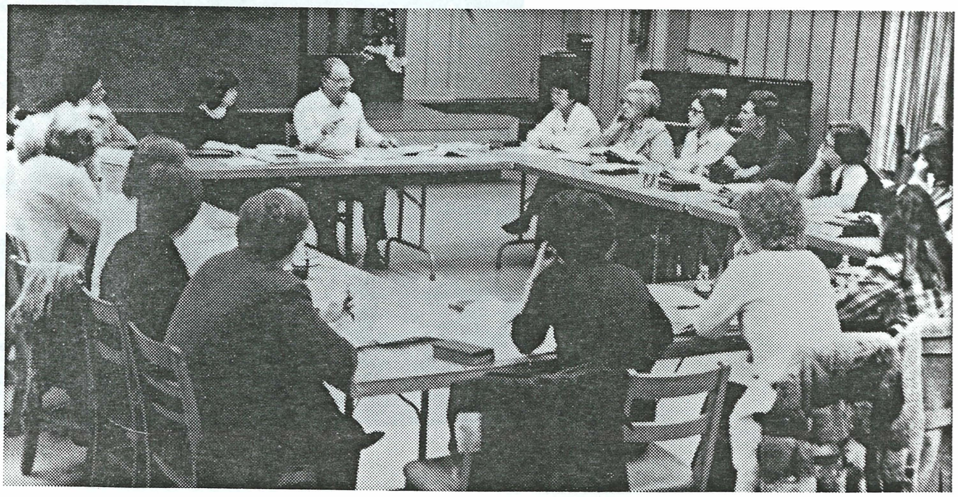
The Senior Highs take a trip to Colorado in the early 1970's. The chaperones were Mike Rigsby, Dr. & Mrs. Walther, and Rev. Jerome & Elsie Cain.

Camp Brewer ... 1972
John Williams, one of our summer ministers, is seated in the middle.

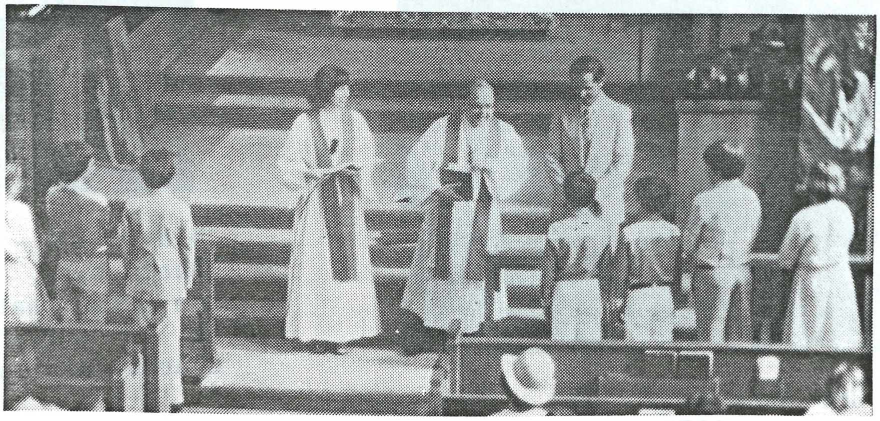
The UMY puts on a live nativity --- 1979.

"Old Blue" - The first church bus. There were two more that followed it. Currently, the church only has a van.

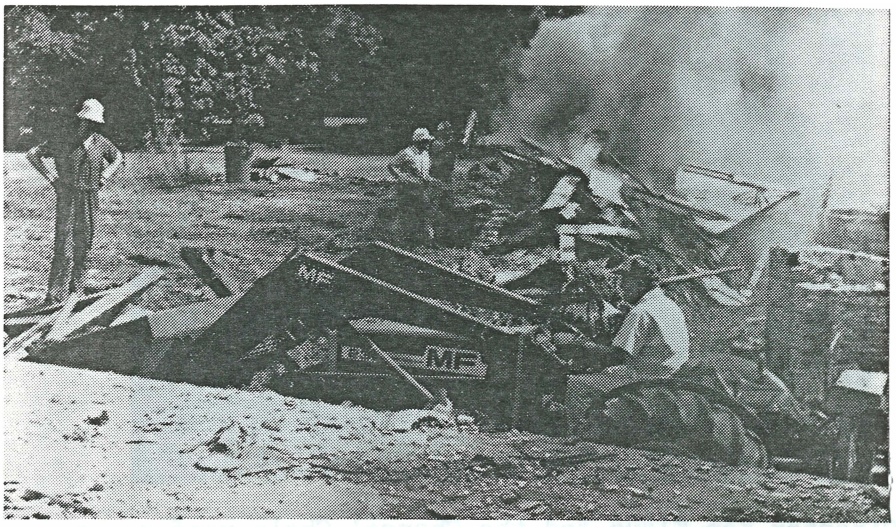
Rev. Baker oversees the opening of the Activities Building in 1978.



The Winns conduct an Administrative Board Meeting in the early 1980's.



The Winns welcome a new class of members into the church.



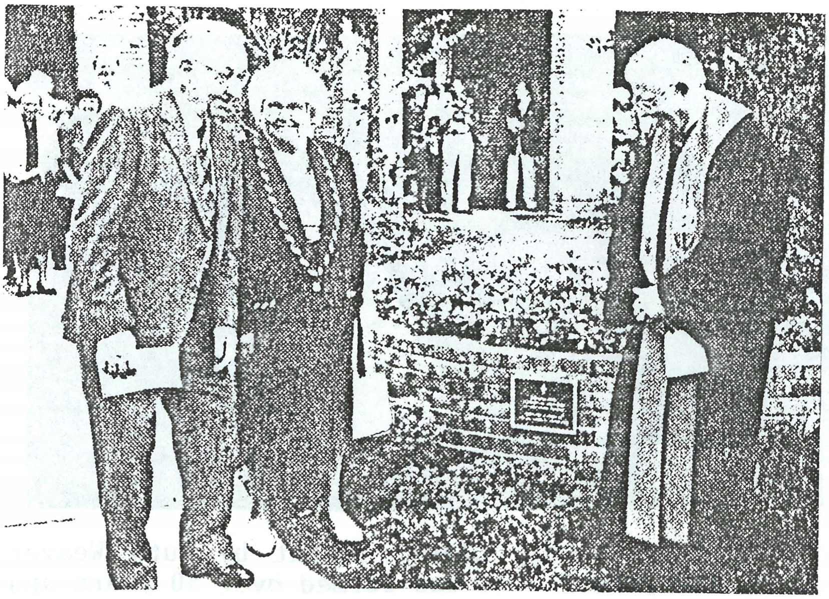
Hartwell Lewis supervises as Roy Baker clears away the Pettigrew house.

Rev. Einsel and the choir celebrate the new green choir robes in 1993.

The Wesley Friendship Class, taught by Ruth Weaver, meets in the parlor. It was formed over 50 years ago.

Director Ken Klaus and the Chancel Choir perform at the Ecumenical Songfest. Dr. Hideo Koike annually coordinates this community-wide event.

Some of our clowns that participate in a Clowning Ministry. It was begun by John & Carol Millwater in the 1980's.



Rev. Alan Einsel officiates as the patio garden is dedicated to Rev. Jerome & Elsie Cain in 1993.

C6